The Tire House • Renovation Fever • Inversheil • The River Rock School

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

THE CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES • EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Volume 16, Number 1 • $7.00

Architecture in Appalachia

Articles, Essays, Fiction, Poetry, and Reviews

The Raising

You read the book once
and let it dream into you,
pages of long-haired men with straw hats,
lean women in cut-offs,
raising houses like Amish barns,
lines of them sitting on beams
as others lifted them.
You said you could smell the oak and sweat
and fresh raspberry pies,
hear the one, two, three heave
the hammers big as baseball bats.
You said one Saturday
when we woke:
I can do this.

You had plans reworked
torn, crinkled
over the kitchen table, the couch, the rocker.
The mill promised oak next week
for two months.
Three banks wouldn't take us
a 24-year-old at Bank One
his silk shirt, soft hands, repeating
no contractor, no real experience,
a guy from church will help.

Then the day came
when the Schnitzelbank was resurrected,
you sat and carved two hundred and twelve pegs
during lunch hours.
Saturdays I made you thermoses of hot chocolate
while you worked in the shed
the crisp slivers of oak covering the ground
tenons, collar-ties, purlins,
the snow fell quiet
as if not to disturb,
your long brown hair hanging out your hat
a pipe tucked in the corner.

You rigged the tractor
and a set of old lawn mower tires
so you could move the 8x8 green oak beams
by yourself.
As pieces were finished
we covered them in new piles
under blue and brown tarps,
the snow froze on top.

April 26 we shoveled ice off the floor
people came from Pennsylvania, Ohio,
Virginia, Ontario, up the road,
with jugs of water, funny cakes,
bags of red apples,
they came with tool belts,
ropes, come-alongs,
giant drills and bits as long as your arm.

Tim came early
eyeing everything
getting the story from you.
He told Rachelle and me to bring knee braces
when a bent was going up.
The first bent went up easy
a good omen.
We all cheered.
Bob cleaned out a mortise and tenon joint
with his chisel.

Seventeen of us squatted
and laid our hands on the longest bent,
three posts and two crosspieces,
Keith and Lowell at the corners.
Instructions were given twice.
Grunts and heaves pushed while
slowly it rose
casting a long shadow in the meadow.
Dad and Dennis
tapped the bottom of the posts
with fat wooden mallets
until its tenons dropped in the mortise holes
and it stood erect, the sun catching it.

Dick put floor joists in.
Mom and Lannette piled picnic tables full,
enough lunch for five days.
Brent in his yellow John Deere hat
chewing straw
hammered in the queen posts.
I caught you sneaking a look at the book once.
Noel hung on rafters fifteen feet high
waiting for the crane to carry up the next purlin.
God was in the feel of the sun, the still air, our rough hands.

At dusk the oak frame glowed complete,
a home,
we all stood back
and watched you nail an evergreen branch to the peak
paying homage to the forest.

— Cheryl Denise

Cheryl Denise lives in Philippi, W.Va., and works as a nurse doing cancer screenings for low income women. She and her husband, Mike Miller, live on a farm where they recently built their own timber frame home. Denise, who is part of the Barbour County Writers Workshop, has had poems published in Pokeberry Days: A West Virginia Literary Collection, Mennonite Life, Greeting the Dawn: An Anthology of New Mennonite Writing, *and* Gospel Herald.

Cover photograph of Kentuck Knob, Chalk Hill, Pa., by Robert P. Ruschak. Cover layout by Hillhouse Graphic Design, Kingsport, Tenn.

Spring 1999
Volume 16, Number 1

NOW & THEN
THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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Now & Then has been published three times a year since 1984 by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. The Center is one of the State of Tennessee's Centers of Excellence supporting artistic, scholarly, and public service projects in the region. For membership information see *NewsCASS*, inserted in this magazine.

Submissions of poetry, fiction, articles, personal essays, graphics, and photographs concerned with Appalachian life, past and present, are welcomed if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Upcoming deadlines: Health Care — November 1, 1999 (for Spring 2000); Appalachian Accents — March 1, 2000 (for Summer 2000). **Address correspondence to:** ***Now & Then,*** Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City TN 37614, or email: Woodsidj @ etsu.edu. **Send Poetry to:** Linda Parsons Marion, 2909 Fountain Park Blvd., Knoxville TN 37917. **Send book reviews or suggestions for reviews to:** Sandy Ballard, English Dept., Carson-Newman College, Box 2059, Jefferson City TN 37760. ***Now & Then*** guidelines are available on the World Wide Web at: http://cass.etsu.edu/n&t/guidelin.htm.

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TBR No. 260-091-98 4.5M
ISSN No. 0896-2693

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Printed by Inové Graphics, Kingsport, Tenn.

Special thanks to David Close, Larry Smith, and Susan Waggoner.

"It seems to me that in the case of the design arts, there's been a tendency to look east and north for inspiration. I don't think you necessarily have to do that. We can look for inspiration within our own region."

—David Hill

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Building Dreams

Last summer, my family and I toured Kentuck Knob, a Frank Lloyd Wright house located in Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands. The guide told the little flock of tourists she was leading through the house about the time the contractor for the job, a local man by the name of Herman Keys, discovered a problem with the plans. When Wright visited the site in mid-construction, Keys took the famous architect aside and pointed out the error. Wright, not known for being particularly easygoing, seemed to take it well. He reviewed the plans and worked out the necessary changes with Keys.

But when he returned to his office, he upbraided his architectural staff. How *could* they, he demanded, let some mountain man show them up? That story, together with the discovery that the stonemasons who had worked on the house in the mid-1950s were still alive, gave birth to what became Dave Zuchowski's article, "The House with No Square Corners" (p. 14).

Besides reading about how highly skilled traditional stonemasons Jesse Wilson Sr. and his son Jesse Jr. translated Wright's masterful design into reality, you'll also find the stories behind the building of churches, a school, and a mortuary, plus a wide variety of dwellings. One of the first common threads I detected running through all these accounts was the amount of just plain hard work Appalachians put into their building projects.

In the case of Kentuck Knob, for instance, the Wilsons set in place somewhere between 600 and 800 tons of sandstone over about four months. Back in the 1920s, as Teresa Thomas Gereaux tells us in "The River Rock School" (p. 30), over 500 people in the community of Damascus, Va., spent two years of their free time hauling river rock up from the Laurel River to build a fine educational facility for their children. In "Turning Trash into Treasure" (p. 18), Michelle Gorman describes how she and husband Chris Chmiel are spending their evenings and weekends building their Athens County, Ohio, house partially out of 350 used tires, each one packed (they swear) with 350 pounds of dirt.

Appalachians, just like Americans everywhere, use their buildings—especially their houses—as a way of telling the world how they'd like to be regarded, where they see themselves in the pecking order. Jerry Richardson in his memoir "Renovation" (p. 27) takes us back to the days in Lynch, Ky., when the novelty of private ownership after decades as a company-owned town launched a frenzied home improvement fight-to-the-death, a crusade in which siding was "a major factor in the quest for status."

But what was truly affecting was seeing how what we build lays bare our dreams of who we'd like to be and our many attempts to reinvent the world in which we live. In "Black Iron Tongue" (p. 34), poet Ralph S. Coleman sits in his tan mobile home in the Virginia countryside, somewhat ruefully picturing himself as the master of the Spanish villa he swears he'll build one of these days. And in "Invershiel" (p. 3), Elizabeth Lawson and Charles Watkins recount Agnes and Julian Morton's painstaking efforts to create an idealized Scottish village in the North Carolina mountains.

De Witt Dykes' dream was in some ways the simplest and the most unattainable of them all: He wanted to be an architect. His father had convinced the young man that an African American in the 1920s would be hard pressed to find enough work to make a living. He chose to go into the ministry instead. When I got to the part in Bill Dockery's "Born to Build" (p. 9) where the Rev. Dykes finally opened up his own architectural firm at the age of 73, this graying, middle-aged editor just barely resisted the urge to stand up in my cubicle and cheer.

I found myself shaking my head whenever the story about Wright's indignation over having been shown up by a "mountain man" crossed my mind. Well, he certainly wasn't the first person to underestimate the intelligence, skill, ingenuity, and craft of Appalachian builders—and he probably won't be the last. We hope this issue, especially by showcasing the work of the master craftsmen who were Wright's collaborators (whether or not he saw them that way), helps to set the record straight.

—Jane Harris Woodside, editor

From This Desk

I leave the sun-stunned yard for this shaded desk
and worry that the choice will allow nothing
for mistakes. Antique wood and a brass plate
naming a craftsman's good work, his faithful homage
to the unknown: family business, doctor's dilemma,
calculations, sheets and sheets of what the poet
could not say. Still, he sawed and sanded.

I study grain and texture, lay my hands on surfaces
like the blind preacher I feared in childhood
caressing smooth verses as if they would suddenly
form a cross to be mounted. Longing is a tree
that grows in another country. The day is dense
and I am contemplating splinters as if they were forests,
filing lathes as if they were plows.

The season grows towards a turning—
sunflowers' huge heads tilting in a commitment
of worship. From my window I am almost
convinced there is movement just beyond
this desk. Something known and not seen
inspiring blooms, hands that build,
mistakes carved from perfection.

—Lisa Shaw Black

As the mother of four children it has been Lisa Shaw Black's privilege to devote her time to them and their many activities. She also assists her husband in his software consulting business. Black is a graduate of the University of West Florida, member of the Knoxville Writers' Guild, and a regular reader at Barnes and Noble in Knoxville, Tenn.

Inversheil

A New Old World in the Blue Ridge Mountains

by Charles Alan Watkins and Elizabeth Lawson

With the North Carolina mountains as a backdrop, a mother and son try to create a Highland refuge from the chaos of the 20th century.

In September 1967, *Palm Beach Life,* "America's Oldest Society Journal," announced that "a new old world" was being created near the resort village of Linville in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. There, Julian Morton and his mother, Agnes MacRae Morton, were building a modern 16th century Scottish community called Invershiel, a project intended to cater to what one newspaper referred to as "the Rolls Royce set." The location, near Banner Elk, N.C., and straddling Avery and Watauga Counties, seemed ideally suited for such a plan: The jagged peaks that surrounded Invershiel were, in the minds of many, reminiscent of Scotland itself.

Certainly the Morton family had had a long relationship with the area. Originally from Wilmington, N.C., Agnes MacRae's father, Hugh, and grandfather Donald purchased some 16,000 acres in the Linville area and formed the Linville Improvement Co. in 1887. Their intention, beyond timbering, was to build a resort town that would incorporate the health advantages of country living and maintain the beauty of the natural environment. The focus was on outdoor activities, including tennis, horseback riding, fishing, and — a rarity in the mountains at that time — golf. Over the next half century, Linville developed slowly as an exclusive mountain enclave of cottages. But after the death of Agnes Morton's father in 1951, the holdings of both the Linville Co. and Hugh MacRae & Co., including the remaining Linville real estate, were divided among his heirs and stockholders. It was a portion of this property that would provide the basis for Invershiel a decade later.

The jagged peaks that surrounded Invershiel were, in the minds of many, reminiscent of Scotland itself.

America's Braemar

The MacRaes had emigrated from Scotland several generations earlier. Beginning in the 1950s, Agnes Morton and her family began to use the Linville area as a backdrop for the celebration of their Scottish heritage.

In 1955 after a cousin had provided her with details of the Scottish Games held in Round Hill, Conn., Morton contacted Donald MacDonald, a Charlotte newspaper reporter who was a leading light in the Scottish heritage movement. He had already organized a

Elizabeth Lawson

Agnes Morton's Croft House has had its sod roof replaced with shingles. Note the rounded corners and diamond-paned windows.

Robert Burns Society chapter in Charlotte and cofounded the Clan Donald Society of the United States. In 1954, MacDonald attended Scotland's Braemar Highland Gathering, the most famous Highland Games in the world. Together, he and Morton established the Grandfather Mountain Highland games, which first took place on August 19, 1956.

Neither Morton nor MacDonald knew much about organizing Highland Games — in fact, they used MacDonald's souvenir program from Braemar as a guide. Nonetheless, the Grandfather Games were immediately successful, growing to the extent that the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games are often referred to as "America's Braemar." Much of this success can be attributed to the location on Grandfather Mountain, possible because Morton's eldest son, Hugh, had inherited the mountain from his grandfather. As MacDonald himself said, "No other setting could compare to it."

Invershiel's Beginnings

With the success of the Games assured, Morton turned to an even more permanent celebration of Scotland: Inversheil, named for the town in Scotland near the birthplace of a MacRae ancestor. Her partner was her youngest son Julian, who she said probably had "a little more Scotland in his blood than the rest." Although the pair had apparently discussed the idea for a decade, Inversheil Inc. really began in August 1964 when Agnes Morton deeded two tracts of land to the resort, totaling 705 acres. The property, bounded on one corner by N.C. Routes 105 and 184, sloped up 1,000 feet from the highways to a tall peak the Mortons called Dunvegan. After Agnes and Julian Morton added more land, Inversheil grew to about 2,000 acres.

Although Julian Morton was, apparently, a self-taught expert on Scottish architecture and served as Inversheil's overall design director, the project still needed a formally trained architect. The Mortons found Bruce Robertson, who was living in Charlotte, N.C. A graduate of Princeton University and the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), Robertson had the right social credentials. In 1965, while holding a lectureship at Leeds University in England, Robertson toured Scotland with the Mortons, later making several additional trips to collect material for the design work.

Agnes Morton's partner was her youngest son Julian, who she said probably had "a little more Scotland in his blood than the rest."

Julian wanted no elements later than the 16th century, believing that after that date, the English influence overwhelmed traditional Scottish style. Robertson helped him select appropriate elements to use in the creation of Inversheil. As Robertson moved along with the project after his return to the U.S., he brought in fellow architect and friend from Carnegie Tech, Charles Hastings, who was also in practice in Charlotte. Inversheil was essentially a moonlighting experience for the two friends, enabling them to work on the weekends in lovely surroundings with their families — not to mention the opportunity to make contacts with a well-heeled potential clientele. When Robertson left Inversheil, Hastings replaced him as project architect.

A Scottish Village

There were three facets to the development of Inversheil. First, and most importantly, it was a sales operation, designed to sell real estate for single family homes. These lots were restricted homesites, requiring approval by Inversheil of plans and specifications before grading could begin. The Scottish theme was unstated in the formal Declaration of Restrictions. It did not need to be. The potential customer base understood what was intended. As Agnes Morton said, "We're selling to close friends and friends of theirs so we'll all get along well together."

This "our-crowd-and-no-crowding" tenor guaranteed the Mortons the design control they needed while at the same time gave them the latitude to plan a small 12-lot A-frame development for skiers, Cabin Gap. Cabin Gap undoubtedly would have been invisible from the Scottish part of Inversheil. The Mortons hoped to sell as many as 200 homesites for Scottish-style houses but, probably because of the hilly terrain, laid out only 62 lots.

Secondly, Inversheil was a "Scottish Village." The Mortons intended to attract both potential lot buyers and tourists with this Scottish Village aspect, although Julian was not particularly fond of tourists. In Hastings' words, the Village was to be "the sort of thing that would sell the idea of Scotland."

It was to be a collection of 25 to 30 shops that would, first of all, provide Invershiel's residents with the essential services that British village shops have until recently always supplied their local customers. There was to be a greengrocer, a bank, a beauty shop, and a dry cleaner. There were also to be businesses catering more directly to tourists, including antique shops, a handmade furniture shop, a bagpipe factory, a 35-room inn with a restaurant, and a Scottish import store. Many of the shops were to have apartments above them, providing their keepers with a traditional live-over opportunity. It was anticipated that the shopkeepers would be of Scottish ancestry, thereby completing the circle of quaintness.

The Village was the aspect of Invershiel that occupied most of Robertson's attention. His design used a series of traditional elements, including stone construction, tiled roofs, leaded glass, crow-stepped gables, and common walls to create the Highland Village theme. A *kirk* or church, would cap the Village's single cobblestoned street on one end; the other end was to be anchored by a *tolbooth*, the Scottish term for a small towered town hall. The anchors would serve the same focusing function that Sleeping Beauty's Castle and the Victorian railroad station provide in Disneyland and that department stores furnish large shopping malls.

Robertson also spent considerable time making sure that automobiles would not be visible from within the Village. For those in need of fuel, however, both automotive and otherwise, they built a filling station, modeled on a 16th century coach stop. Although primarily intended to sell gas, it was also to include a tea-room.

The third and final aspect of Invershiel were amenities designed to enhance what *Palm Beach Life* referred to as its "prestige-flair." The first of these was to be a private club decorated in a Scottish motif, along with tennis courts and a curling rink. Further, Invershiel would be an equestrian center: They made plans to develop a steeplechase course, stables, a show-ring, hunt course, and bridle paths. The Mortons envisioned a steeplechase that would be, in the words of one newspaper article, "one of the biggest events, horse-wise, in the state."

Elizabeth Lawson

Julian Morton's home, Thistle Dubh, features crow-stepped gables and a window copied from Stirling Castle in central Scotland.

Croft Houses and 16th Century Gas Stations

Construction began in the summer of 1966 on homes for Julian Morton and his mother, using stone quarried on nearby Grandfather Mountain. Agnes Morton's home, Croft House, was a small one-bedroom dwelling with a central living area, a small kitchen, and a loft. Based on a traditional farm or croft house style, the house featured rounded corners, supposedly an Outer Hebrides technique to prevent the house from whistling in high winds. Its most pronounced feature was a sod roof.

Julian's home, known variously as Thistle Dubh (pronounced "This Will Do") and El Morocco, was also a one-bedroom, one bath house, though somewhat larger and more elaborate than Croft House. His house incorporated design elements from Scotland's Claypotts and Stirling Castles and featured crow-stepped gables and a slate roof. A guest apartment upstairs contained a bedroom and kitchenette and was accessible only by an outside stairway. After experiencing Avery County's winters, Julian soon built a tower enclosing the stairs. The design for this house was Julian's own; he also collaborated with Robertson on his mother's home.

Robertson then designed a complex consisting of a two-bedroom main house and a separate shop. The roofs were done in slate, and an adjoining three-car garage had a sod roof similar to Agnes Morton's. Originally constructed for Buster McClain and his family, the builder of the Invershiel structures, it later became a guest cottage, while the shop was converted into an apartment.

These buildings, along with some impressive stone entrance pillars, clustered at the approach into Invershiel. Featured prominently in newspaper and magazine articles that appeared throughout 1967 and 1968, they served as the "model homes" for the prospective development. The Mortons were, of course, only biding their time in

A kirk or church, would cap the Village's single cobblestoned street on one end; the other end was to be anchored by a tolbooth. The anchors would serve the same focusing function that Sleeping Beauty's Castle and the Victorian railroad station provide in Disneyland.

Elizabeth Lawson

The original design for Invershiel included an equestrian center with plans for a steeplechase course, stables, a show-ring, hunt course, and bridle paths. The Highlands Stable Club is now a private residence.

these small dwellings, having already planned a three-story castlelike house further inside the compound, along with a four-bay garage that could be converted to a party room.

Slow Sales

When asked about sales by a reporter in early 1968, Agnes Morton said, "We're in no hurry." Unfortunately, neither were the buyers, but there were some important early ones. Former Scottish Heritage Society president Bobby Groves and his wife Cornelia built a house of fieldstone about the size of Croft House. Frank Bynum, an Alabama attorney, and his wife Ellis constructed a beautiful and exacting castlelike house, designed for him by Hastings. Only four other people bought lots, and none of them actually built homes on their property.

If lot sales were slow, construction on the Village was similarly unhurried. In early January 1967, Julian leased the corner of the intersection of N.C. Highways 105 and 184 opposite the Village to Texaco. The Mortons pledged to build a Scottish-style gas station, designed by Robertson. Texaco would lease the unusual station for 15 years at $680 per month. With the construction supervised by Hastings, the station, minus the tearoom, was completed in 1968.

Inversheil also built the private Highland Saddle Club. Partially roofed in sod, the club was decorated in a lavish Scottish-revival style, complete with period antiques and tartan-upholstered walls. Certain members, recognizing the splendor and exclusivity of the club, referred to it as MacCamelot. Construction on one of the two Village anchors, the *tolbooth*, began in 1971. Completed in 1973, it housed the planned Scottish import store, which opened on April 1, 1973.

The Mortons built an additional small stone craft shop within the Village grounds, but by this time, the bells were tolling for Invershiel. The great land boom of the 1960s that had not only financed Invershiel but also the construction of large ski resorts in Avery and Watauga Counties, ran out of steam in the mid-1970s. Revenues simply failed to offset the borrowing necessary for the construction of such large undertakings. In the case of Invershiel, undercapitalization seems to have been even more of a problem: There was not enough money, calculated to be about $3.5 million, to build the Village on the scale that would have eventually provided the income the project so sorely lacked. The Mortons relinquished control of Invershiel in 1976. In 1977, it passed into the hands of a Florida developer who renamed it Tynecastle but otherwise abandoned the Scottish motif.

Robertson, the project architect, struck at the problem when he admitted "no place in Scotland is as authentically old Scottish as the village to be built in North Carolina will be."

Adrift in Time

Inversheil was a grand dream, but—although it was billed as historically accurate—it was somewhat adrift in time. The Mortons were determined to focus on 16th century architecture because they believed that the English influence was dominant thereafter. But their entire understanding of Scottish history was filtered by two important developments largely English in origin.

The first of these was "Highlandism." Historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, in his seminal article "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," defined Highlandism as both "the artificial creation of new Highland traditions presented as ancient and original and distinctive" and the process by which Lowland Scotland adopted these traditions. In short, both the Highlands and the Lowlands became tartanized, and all of Scotland essentially came to be viewed as Highland. Sir Walter Scott's romantic novels of Highland life were a major factor in the development of Highlandism. It all culminated with the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822, where he appeared in full Highland dress, to the surprise of Lowlanders present who were said to have regarded the costume as that of a thief.

The second development, described in sports historian Grant Jarvie's *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth*, was "Balmorality." Queen Victoria, also entranced by Scott's novels, began to vacation in the Highlands, eventually acquiring Balmoral Castle. Her support for Highland gatherings, especially Braemar, linked the Games to ideas of loyalty (to the Crown) and royalty. It was during Victoria's reign, says historian Celeste R. Ray, that "the image of the Highlander became civilized, chivalrized and set."

The upper crust also came to see the Highlands as a sporting playground. The development of Highland sporting estates by elites who

were following Victoria's lead was one factor in moving the crofters, whose vernacular dwellings served as the basis for Agnes Morton's Croft House, off the land.

In a sense, this is part and parcel of what Jarvie has called "The Glamour of Backwardness." Speaking of actual Highland cottages, Victoria herself noted, "You could not believe they were meant for human habitations." Yet at the same time, she described them as "very picturesque."

The MacRaes confronted the same situation when they came to lay out Linville in the 1890s. Undoubtedly they saw cabins that were equally "picturesque." It appears they may have had Scotland in mind as they went about their work: A 1908 Linville publication called one local hill Donald's Crag. The word *crag* is hardly a mountain expression.

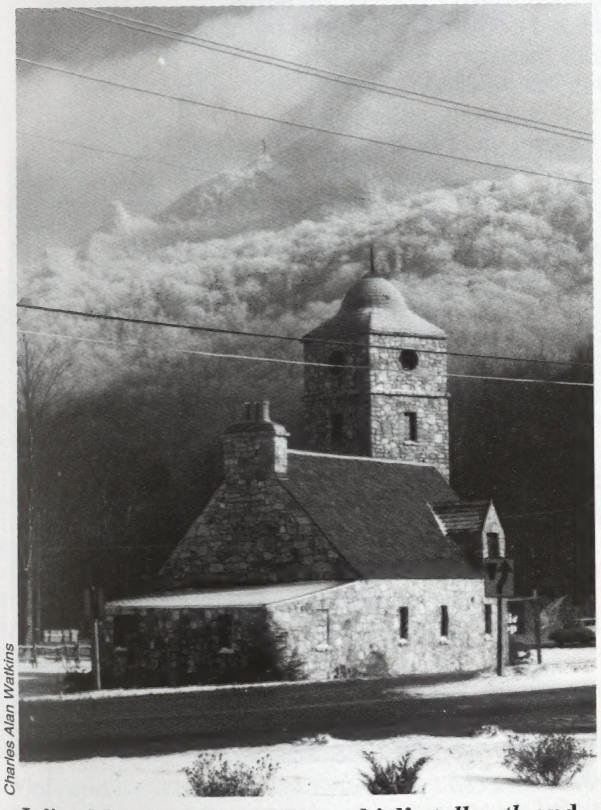
For the Mortons, who certainly fit the mold of sporting landlords, to inhabit mean farm dwellings was akin to dressing up in rags to haunt one's own ruin. The fact that the Mortons' small houses had such conveniences as a steam bath, tiled floors, Rolls Royces in the garage, closets, and refrigerators hidden beyond secret panels only added to the incongruity of the situation. But these houses were not intended to be authentic clones of original structures. They were an effort, like the Gothic Revival movement at the turn of the 20th century, to create and control a perfect environment within the chaos of modernity with reasonable facsimiles.

More Scottish than Scotland

In fact, Invershiel, for all the talk of authenticity was, of necessity, somewhat of an architectural fabrication. Robertson, the project architect, struck at the problem when he admitted "no place in Scotland is as authentically old Scottish as the village to be built in North Carolina will be." Robertson knew that villages in the British Isles typically evolved over several centuries, making the maintenance of a single architectural style unlikely. Inversheil, by cutting everything from a single bolt of cloth, could avoid the untidiness of reality and create a Scotland that was better than Scotland itself.

Elizabeth Lawson

The former residence of Buster McClain, the builder of some of Invershiel's structures, was also used as a guest cottage.



Charles Alan Watkins

Julian Morton designed Invershiel's *tolbooth* and had the tower raised an additional story to make it Avery County, N.C.'s tallest building.

The selected use and arrangement of elements in the Romanesque fashion of late 19th century American architects rather than the exact reproduction of authentic Scottish buildings also enabled scale to be maintained. Julian Morton's house is a fine example of this process. Although newspapers often referred to it as a duplicate of one of the towers of Claypotts Castle in Dundee, Scotland, it was nothing of the sort. Claypotts is technically a tower-house, not a castle. On each end of Claypotts is a tall tower, and atop each tower is a rectangular, gabled stone structure that served as a sort of apartment. It was one of the apartments that Julian used as the basis for his design, eliminating the tower itself and anchoring the apartment to the ground. In doing so, he maintained the scale with other nearby buildings.

Invershiel was an imagined community, not politically based in the sense of professor of international studies Benedict Anderson's seminal description in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* but rather based on architecture and topography. The Mortons clearly believed that the association of Scottish architecture with the craggy mountains would unite a community of Scottish-Americans (and some would-be Scottish-Americans) who had the means to participate in the imagining process.

At first glance, Invershiel would seem to be nothing more than a protoversion of things like Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Va., where one can visit a series of 17th century-esque European villages without actually having to go anywhere.

Julian wanted no elements later than the 16th century, believing that after that date, the English influence overwhelmed traditional Scottish style.

But the villages at Busch Gardens provide a largely passive tourist experience and serve as a highly commercial background for the various thrill rides the park offers. Invershiel was not meant to be passive. The Mortons at Invershiel clearly intended to live *as* Scots, not merely like Scots. They hoped to find a significant number of people who would share that vision, including those who would work in the Village.

In order to make this possible, they reinvented the Linville terrain as Scotland. Poet, literary scholar, and essayist Fred Turner, in his important essay, "The Invented Landscape," speaks of an "inventionist ecology" that "maintains that it is both possible and desirable not only to conserve natural resources, preserve natural ecosystems, and restore natural landscapes but also, when the occasion warrants and the knowledge is sufficient, to *create* new ecosystems, new landscapes, and perhaps even new species."

Creating a new landscape was easy for the Mortons: They needed only to re-vision the mountains — not physically, but in their minds. In doing so, they created both the rationale and the prerequisite for Invershiel. In a sense, the re-visioning process resulting in an American form of Highlandism since they psychologically pushed out the authentic Scotch-Irish settlers who were, after all, originally Lowland Scots.

Re-visioning the Mountains

The Mortons' efforts were not the only attempt at re-visioning the mountains through architecture in the 1960s. Virtually all of the ski resorts developed simultaneously with Invershiel adopted a Bavarian chalet-style architecture. Atop nearby Beech Mountain, the Land of Oz theme park that opened in 1970 presented a fantasy environment that seemed to grow naturally out of the mountaintop.

In a sense, Invershiel was only one of a series of co-existing visions about the meaning of the region. It was the most coherent of the various efforts, but all of them demonstrated a postindustrial understanding of the mountains. In the industrial period, the mountains were useful because there were minerals to be mined and timber to be harvested. In the 1960s, those who sought to use the

Creating a new landscape was easy for the Mortons: They needed only to re-vision the mountains — not physically, but in their minds.

mountains had a more sophisticated understanding of how to go about their business. The mountains were a tabula rasa, an unformed opportunity that could be used as a frame for those who wished not only to create wealth but also to reinvent themselves in the process.

It was an effort as old as America, whose first settlers sought to find both personal comfort and to build a "citie on a hill." That Invershiel failed is less important than the vision of a tourist-based, rather than an extractive-based, plan of regional development that it offered. But such ideas in the 1960s and early 1970s were premature, making Invershiel something truly rare: an idea ahead of its time. N&T

Elizabeth Lawson is a senior majoring in public history at Appalachian State University (ASU) in Boone, N.C. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school to study historic preservation. Charles Watkins is the director of ASU's Appalachian Cultural Museum.

Imagining a Chinese Poet in the University of Tennessee Trial Gardens, October 1998

But for the falling and rising whir
of traffic separating this garden
and the river, but for clocks and calendars
and the refuse of history, I could be Wang-Wei
watching the butterflies and goldfinches
limning the last of summer. Even the whine
of engine and rubber fades beneath a curtain
of cricketsong, sudden wind in the oaks
sending the first brown leaves across the stone
path like bits of singed paper. The rustling bamboo
invokes an image of the aging poet
looking out over his Wang-ch'uan valley,
cliffs sliced by a river not unlike this one,
longing for his old friend, as I long for mine.

We are not so different in our melancholy,
losing twelve hundred years as easily
as the lotus bloom opens and closes,
the butterfly bush bends with the weight
of its full living. Beyond this mapped
and manicured garden, I can see wild ridges
of the Tennessee River Valley pushing skyward,
autumn's first gold glinting the sycamore,
river birch, and red maple. Across a vast expanse
of centuries, our gaze pierces the same veil
of sunlight and cloud shadow, comes to rest
on the same vision: the loved one's face
conjured by wind or moving water, by nothing
but the smell of bark or dying grasses, by all
that endures and is continually departing.

— Judy Loest

A native of Southwest Virginia, Judy Loest received a master's degree in English last August at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Loest won the 1998 Davis-Kidd poetry competition in Knoxville (along with poetry editor Linda Parsons Marion). This past fall she taught a poetry class to ninth graders at the Heska Amuna Synagogue in Knoxville, Tenn.

Born to Build

The Architectural Career of De Witt Dykes Sr.

by Bill Dockery

In his late 60s, a talented African American realizes his dream of becoming an architect.

The portrait shows an older black couple posing in front of their Knoxville, Tenn., home. The photographer has chosen a wide-angle lens for the shot, bringing into equal prominence the meticulously landscaped lawns and careful plantings around the substantial brick rancher in the background.

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Viola and De Witt S. Dykes Sr. display the landscaped gardens surrounding their home in this 1989 photo taken during the annual Dogwood Arts Festival in Knoxville, Tenn. Dykes completed the brick rancher himself in 1954 and subsequently built two additions.

The balding, bespectacled man in the photo is looking at the camera, smiling in obvious satisfaction. Pride of ownership is certainly evident in his face, but nothing in the picture reveals the depth and breadth of the man's accomplishments or the significance of his contributions to architecture in Appalachia.

De Witt Dykes Sr. was the first registered black architect in East Tennessee, an accomplishment in and of itself in a profession that still numbers in its ranks relatively few persons of color. That fact alone would earn him an asterisk in the history books, but his whole life is the story of an ambition that would not turn him loose, despite a lifetime of accomplishment in another field.

Dykes, who died in 1991, was for most of his life a Methodist minister to the area's black congregations. His architectural career started officially when he was almost 67, and it drew its energy from his family's longtime involvement in masonry, one of the few skilled trades available to black

workers in the region.

Dykes' architectural products are not self-consciously Appalachian, but his life embodies the choices and challenges a talented, ambitious African American faced in 20th century Appalachia.

Derailed Plans

The story of Dykes' early life is the typical promising-young-man-triumphs-despite-humble-beginnings tale. Born in Gadsden in Appalachian Alabama in 1903, Dykes found a home in Newport, the small East Tennessee town located about 45 miles east of Knoxville where his family settled around 1911. His father, H.S.R. Dykes, earned his living as a brick mason and served a circuit of black Methodist churches as a lay minister. De Witt, the fifth of six Dykes children, soon joined his father and two brothers in the building trade. By the time he was 14, he was considered a master mason, and at 17, he was a foreman on construction sites.

Paul Efird

A unique bell-shaped roof graces Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Knoxville.

His mother, Mary Anna Wade Dykes, had other hopes for her son, however, and encouraged him to get more education than Newport provided for black children. Dykes enrolled at nearby Morristown College, a historically black school supported by the Methodist Church where he both took college prep courses and taught masonry classes.

At his graduation in 1926, he was intent upon a career in architecture, but advice from his father derailed those plans. He had been offered an instructorship in bricklaying at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, N.C., a position that would also have let him study architecture at the school, but his father told him that a black architect would have a hard time finding employment.

The architect's son, De Witt Dykes Jr., a history professor at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., reinforces that point with statistics. In a profile of his father in *Notable Black American Men,* a 1998 volume edited by Jessie Carney Smith, the younger Dykes writes, "In the 1920s, there were very few African American professional architects: The 1910 census counted only 59 among a national total of 16,613 architects."

Second Choice

So Dykes pursued his father's other calling: a ministry in the Methodist Church. He attended Clark University in Atlanta and simultaneously pursued a bachelor of divinity degree from nearby Gammon Theological Seminary. He graduated from both schools in 1931 and then took a master's degree in sacred theology from Boston University in 1932.

He came back from Boston to churches in the black jurisdiction of the East Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, serving pastorates in Marion, Va., and Chattanooga, Tenn. In 1946, the minister was transferred to the East Vine Avenue (later renamed Lennon-Seney) Methodist Church in Knoxville. The move to Knoxville would shape his ministerial and architectural careers in unexpected ways.

As the younger Dykes recounts, his father "was pastoring a church with a predominantly working-class membership which paid its pastor less than $3,000 yearly. With a daughter in college and other family expenses to pay, Dykes decided to use his brick mason skills to supplement his ministerial income." He first went back to the family construction business in Newport. Later he taught masonry to military veterans at a local vocational school and picked up contract brick projects in Knoxville.

Masonry and ministry merged in 1956 when the national Methodist General Board of Missions hired Dykes to help small mission churches in 13 Southeastern states. His job was to assist small congregations in building or expanding churches, educational facilities, and parsonages, drawing on financial grants from the national church.

Going to work for the national organization, Dykes found colleagues among the professional architects in the Board of Mission's Philadelphia offices. At first, he merely acquired designs for the churches, but soon he was making the drawings himself, coupling his knowledge of masonry with skills he had gained in a drafting course he had taken as a young man one summer in Detroit. The architect in the national office would sign off on his plans, listing him as "Designer." Over the next dozen years, he helped plan and oversee construction of some 86 church facilities and one fire hall located across the Southeast. Even with the imprimatur of a national denomination, Dykes still faced obstacles because of his race. Though the vast majority of his work was done for black congregations, the contractors he was supervising were usually white.

"White contractors weren't used to taking orders from a black man, and there were some uncomfortable situations when he insisted that work be done to his standards," says the younger Dykes in a recent telephone interview. "I went with him on one job where he had to inspect a white contractor's work. It was tense."

Dykes was also sensitive to the criticism of his architectural peers, remembers Lansing King, a Knoxville architect who had worked for Dykes. He remembers Dykes' having once gotten upset when a dean of the University of Tennessee (UT) College

Paul Efird

Windows at the nave and front entrance echo the graceful bellshape of the ceiling of the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

of Architecture and Design criticized some of his work. "There was also a degree of bitterness, a little bit of resentment about how hard it was to claw your way into the white community," King remembers.

Dykes was doing his work at the height of the civil rights movement across the South, and often the presence of this black stranger in a community was looked on with suspicion and hostility by people who thought he was there as an organizer, his son says. But when all was said and done, none of these difficulties daunted Dykes.

A Second Chance

By the time he retired from the Board of Missions in 1968, Dykes was ready to start his dream career in earnest. He had taken correspondence courses in architecture shortly before he retired, and he learned that some of the requirements of Tennessee's architect's license could be met with documented

Dykes couldn't leave his Dandridge Avenue home without passing at least one building he had designed.

experience. So he interned with a local architect. In 1970, only a few months before his 67th birthday, he passed the three-day test the first time he took it, becoming the first black registered architect in East Tennessee.

"In essence, he had served an apprenticeship, much the way lawyers used to train by reading law in an office," says the younger Dykes.

He was soon inducted into the American Institute of Architects, joining about 200 blacks among the AIA membership at the time, and he joined the Guild for Religious Architecture in 1973. He was one of only a handful of credentialed minister/architects in the nation.

Finally in 1976, after having already designed the majority of his Knoxville churches, the 73-year-old took the major step of moving his operations out of his home and establishing his own architectural firm. De Witt S. Dykes & Associates, Architects, was housed in an office on nearby Magnolia Avenue. He soon had a small staff and also provided internship experiences for students from the University of Tennessee College of Architecture.

King, who worked for Dykes during the mid-1970s, remembers the man with a mixture of respect and awe. "He was a strong man, an amazing man, with wrists that seemed as thick as my waist," says King. His boss never lost his skill at masonry. Dykes mixed mortar from scratch, "the old way," King remembers, using slaked lime and creating a mortar as thick and tacky as peanut butter. "I got to lay some brick with him one Saturday. Just to watch him lay bricks was incredible."

It was a combination of changes in the social structure and in the urban environment in the 1960s that created a fertile ground for this minister-turned-architect and presented him with an unusual opportunity to create his own unique architectural legacy in Knoxville. In the 1950s and 1960s, Knoxville had undergone two successive waves of urban renewal in the city's First Creek Valley, just east of the downtown. The result was a double diaspora that razed one of the city's historic black communities and drove its inhabitants farther east in the city. Many of the city's black congregations, displaced by the urban renewal process, were ready to build new churches just as Dykes was changing professions.

Between 1963 and 1978, Dykes built nine churches for some of the city's most prominent black congregations, including Mount Olive Baptist, Mount Calvary Baptist, Logan Temple A.M.E. Zion, and Emmanuel United Presbyterian. He also built a black-owned funeral home, Unity Mortuary, as well as co-designing a retirement home and a city recreation facility for handicapped persons. When Knoxville's 1982 World's Fair rolled around, Dykes was an associate architect and designed 11 retail and snack shops on the fairgrounds.

But even with the end of legally sanctioned segregation at the beginning of his second career, prejudice continued to limit his professional potential. "Though many white architects were outwardly cordial and shared information Dykes might specifically request," his son writes, "only a couple of white architects were willing to engage in joint ventures to design projects and share commissions. Lack of potential partners to collaborate in bidding on large projects limited the opportunity to design a major building which would attract attention, showcase his talent, and inter-

"White contractors weren't used to taking orders from a black man. I went with him on one job where he had to inspect a white contractor's work. It was tense." — ***De Witt Dykes Jr.***

Paul Efird

Dykes designed Knoxville's Mount Olive Baptist Church in the rectangular nave style and, like many of his buildings, with a brick exterior.

est those private persons who … choose their own architect."

As a result, Dykes designed mostly churches and residences in the black community or government-funded buildings. In fact, five of the 11 major projects he completed in East Knoxville between 1963 and 1982 lie within a mile of his home. Most of the rest are within two miles. Dykes couldn't leave his Dandridge Avenue residence without passing at least one building he had designed.

Rectangles and Hexagons

Marleen Davis, dean of the UT's College of Architecture and Design, says that in designing sacred spaces, Dykes worked

> *Dykes' life embodies the choices and challenges a talented, ambitious African American faced in 20th century Appalachia.*

with two architectural forms: the traditional rectangular nave style that puts the altar at one end and has the congregation facing it and a more modern hexagonal sanctuary that draws the congregation's attention to the center of the sanctuary.

Most of Dykes' Knoxville churches employ the more traditional rectangle, but two — Shiloh Presbyterian, built in 1968, and Mount Calvary Baptist, completed in 1975 — have hexagonal sanctuaries. Dykes may not have been totally comfortable with the more contemporary shape. As Davis points out, at Mount Calvary, Dykes did not follow the full implications of the hexagonal space by putting the altar in the center of the room. Instead, he placed the altar against one wall and imposed navelike seating, which conflicts with the basically circular sanctuary. The Shiloh Church, however, does wrap the pews around the multisided room.

Although Dykes was probably not completely at ease with the hexagonal floor plan, the contemporary style allowed him to play with what was one of his signature characteristics in all his churches: unusual roof lines. Like a partially unfolded umbrella, the roof of Mount Calvary has multiple gables that shelter clerestory windows. These high windows allowed Dykes to illuminate the sacred space naturally while clustering other rooms on the ground level close about the central sanctuary.

Martin Chapel United Methodist Church, built in 1963 while Dykes still worked for the Methodist Board of Missions, and the 1976 Lennon-Seney United Methodist Church, which he had pastored when it was on East Vine Avenue, are examples of his rendering of the traditional church structure. Lennon-Seney is the only one of his churches in the neo-Colonial style common in the South. Emmanuel United Presbyterian Church is probably the most interesting of his Knoxville work. It is built in the traditional nave format, but its roof has a double curve, giving it a bell-like shape. He emphasizes the line with a row of windows that follow the curves.

Most of the structures are peppered with one or another of his favorite building techniques: Naturally, all make liberal use of brick, but he also liked to use Tennessee marble and other stone as accents. He frequently used glue-laminated beams, made of wood planks glued together. The technique allowed him to introduce graceful curves into the exposed structure of the sanctuary. Many of his sanctuaries have clerestory windows; some have hidden windows that light the front of the sacred space without themselves being visible. The brick and stone and wood he often used were generally in warm tones — yellows, pinks, or light browns.

While most of these details are not original with him but are instead part of the sacred architectural repertoire of the time, his use of them in his structures shows further evidence of a creative, even playful designer interested in giving his newfound career a thorough testing.

"He had a clear design approach which incorporated structure, materials, and space," says Davis. "It's impressive to see how well-maintained the churches are. It's clear the congregations take a lot of pride in the church and the architect."

A Hands-on Architect

Of course, Dykes' practice wasn't confined to churches. Architect Eugene Burr teamed with Dykes on the Knoxville Adaptive Center, a swimming pool/gym facility the city of Knoxville built in 1976 for handicapped persons. The Adaptive Center, located only a few blocks from the Dykes home in East Knoxville, used solar panels and other energy self-sustaining features. Dykes' presence on the team helped persuade the city

> *"He was an architect who was willing to work in a hands-on way. He got his hands dirty."*
>
> ***— Annette Anderson***

to make the facility as energy sufficient as possible, Burr says.

Annette Anderson, a teacher in the University of Tennessee School of Planning, remembers that Dykes was deeply committed to the importance of design for all people. In 1970, he represented the interests of mostly black East Knoxville on the founding board of the East Tennessee Community Design Center, an organization that seeks to improve East Tennessee life by bringing design and planning assistance to communities lacking in resources. He was the black community's advocate for design and planning.

"He was an architect who was willing to work in a hands-on way," says Anderson, a former Design Center coordinator. "He did the work of putting a design into reality. He got his hands dirty."

For example, when the Design Center bought an old house near the university to serve as a headquarters, Dykes plunged into the repair of the structure's fireplace. "He did all the masonry work while the rest of us were doing the sheet rock," remembers landscape architect Bill Oliphant, a founder of the center.

Paul Efird

Dykes highlighted the front of the Unity Mortuary in Knoxville. with a stained-glass window (shown in color on this issue's back cover) featuring the 23rd Psalm spelled out in letters made of glass pieces turned edge-on.

Very Deliberate, Very Aware

Another of Dykes' clients was E.O. Hill, a retired Knox County teacher and a shareholder in Unity Mortuary, which Dykes designed and supervised in 1978. "He was exacting, forthright, a perfectionist," Hill remembers. "He did a lot of study and looked at a lot of other mortuaries. And he listened to us."

The multistory stained-glass window at the entrance to the sanctuary is one of the structure's dominant elements. Made of rough chunks of brightly colored glass set in mortar, the window is, as Hill describes it, "a contemporary-type thing" that Dykes also designed. The 23rd Psalm is spelled out in letters made of glass pieces turned edge-on. It is augmented by clerestory windows of similar construction down the sides of the service space. Dykes also designed a diamond-shaped "star of hope" window, much like a cathedral's traditional rose window, to grace the front wall of the room behind the speaker's podium.

Dykes also used this glass technique — common in the 1960s and 1970s — in the new sanctuary at Lennon-Seney United Methodist Church. In other churches, he used opaque glass either in warm tones or in primary colors, as is customary in many Baptist and other Protestant churches.

Hill says Dykes carefully designed the mortuary's sanctuary as an ecumenical space in which all faiths would be comfortable holding funeral services. Though the practice is not common in traditional African American funerals, the minister-turned-architect included an offset — a "cry room" — where family members could experience their grief in privacy, away from other mourners.

"He was very deliberate and very aware of the needs of a mortuary, even though he had never built one before," Hill says. Unity Mortuary remains one of the few structures in the Knoxville area specifically designed as an African American funeral home.

In 1986, a decline in business coupled with increasing health problems prompted him to close Dykes & Associates, though he continued to provide consulting services from his home office.

Curiously, Dykes' legacy is largely uncelebrated. None of the Knoxville churches includes a cornerstone with his name on it. Only at the Knoxville Adaptive Center and the Unity Mortuary do plaques bear his name as the architect. Otherwise, his achievements are documented mainly in the writings of his son and wife, in the papers of a few students studying African American architectural contributions to the city, and in the memories of Knoxville's aging black religious community. N&T

Bill Dockery is a longtime East Tennessee journalist and a Sevierville, Tenn., native who went to high school with singer Dolly Parton. He has written about science, technology, energy, and regional topics from his home in Knoxville, Tenn.

De Witt Dykes' Knoxville Legacy
(Principal structures)

1963 – Martin Chapel United Methodist Church, 1746 Ohio Avenue
1965 – Logan Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, 2744 Selma Avenue
1966 – Emmanuel United Presbyterian Church, 3023 Selma Avenue
1967 – Bentley Street Christian Church, 417 Bentley Street
1968 – Shiloh Presbyterian Church, 904 Biddle Street
1969 – Mount Olive Baptist Church, 1601 Dandridge Avenue
1975 – Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 1807 Dandridge Avenue
1976 – Lennon-Seney United Methodist Church, 2084 Dandridge Avenue
1978 – Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, 546 College Street
1978 – Unity Mortuary, 1425 McCalla Avenue
1982 – Golden Age Retirement Village, 1109 Beaman Lake Road

The House with No Square Corners

by Dave Zuchowski

It all began with Frank Lloyd Wright's design, but it took highly skilled local craftsmen to build this Laurel Highlands retreat.

Some folks estimate that it took 600 to 800 tons of sandstone to complete Kentuck Knob, the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house in southwestern Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands. Others say that 800 tons wouldn't even come close to touching the final figure. One thing for certain, though: The weighty project was completed in just a little over four months by two stonemasons from mountain country, located about 50 miles south of Pittsburgh.

It was in the mid-1950s during the last flowering of his long career that Wright created Kentuck Knob for the I.N. Hagan family of Uniontown, Pa. A 2,300-square foot house built chiefly out of warm-toned, old growth Tidewater red cypress (now extinct), along with all those tons of local fieldstone, Kentuck Knob features many of Wright's hallmarks: an open floor plan, cantilevered overhangs, and plenty of glass.

A Family Tradition

"We started splitting stone in the fall of 1954," says Jesse Wilson of Markleysburg, Pa., who along with his son, also named Jesse, laid the stone for the house with "no square corners." Since Lloyd used a hexagonal grid as the basis for his design, the house contains almost 60 obtuse and acute angles.

While Wright's unique design may have perplexed contractor Herman Keys to some degree, the Wilsons don't remember even looking at the floor plans for the mountain residence. "When we got there, all the walls had already been laid out," says the elder Wilson, 89 years old and as mentally sharp as a chip off one of his stones.

Robert P. Ruschak

Stonemasons Jesse Wilson (r) and his son Jesse Jr. (l) took on the task of laying all the stonework for Kentuck Knob.

The Wilsons come from a family of stonemasons who've left their mark all over the mountainous terrain of Fayette County, Pa., and the surrounding area. You'll find their craft in the form of bridges, homes, roadside walls, state monuments, and hundreds of chimneys on hundreds of houses.

Drive along the National Road, now U.S. Route 40, from Addison, Pa., to Uniontown, and you'll discover several examples of Wilsons' stone handiwork, such as the retaining wall that borders the overlook halfway up Summit Mountain and the stone markers at Fort Necessity, where a young George Washington lost a heated battle to the French during the French and Indian War.

Robert P. Ruschak

The front entrance to Kentuck Knob shows off the combination of wood and stonework that appears throughout the house.

"There are stonemasons around to this day who do a very good job, but they're getting to be rather scarce," says the younger Wilson.

Jesse Wilson Sr.'s grandfather, William W., passed the craft on to his son who, in turn, paved the way for three additional generations of stone builders. Jesse Wilson Sr. remembers joining his father around the age of 32 in the first masonry job he'd ever had that paid anything — a highway bridge on Pa. Route 281, not far from his current home. "Dad built the front wall of Tub Run Bridge," he says. "I built the back and made somewhere around 40 cents an hour for my efforts."

> While Wright's unique design may have perplexed contractor Herman Keys to some degree, the Wilsons don't remember even looking at the floor plans for the mountain residence.

The Wilsons come from a line of hard-working people. Even before the elder Jesse owned a driver's license, he drove a milk truck. Shortly thereafter, he tried his hand at the lumber business, working a crosscut saw for 20 cents an hour.

Jesse Wilson Sr. served what was virtually an apprenticeship under his father, learning the stonemason's trade as he went along. "Dad was one of the best," he says. "He could look at a stone and tell the best way to split it. I learned just about everything I know from him."

After completing Tub Run Bridge, Wilson started his own masonry business and got to be so well-known for his skills that he never had to advertise for work. "I'd build houses, retaining walls, anything at all really," he says. In between times, he drove a truck to help his growing family.

> During his four months on the job, the elder Wilson claims to have worn out three pairs of shoes walking over the chipped stone that collected around the building.

Wilson's own house in Markleysburg started as a two-room structure when he and his wife moved into the stone building more than 60 years ago. As their family of seven children grew, he'd add more rooms. "Even so, the house was usually very crowded," says the elder Wilson.

Getting Down to Work

As testimony to Wilson's skill and renown, dairy and ice cream magnate I.N. Hagan came to the stonemason in 1954 and asked him if he'd help lay the stone for his new home off the Chalk Hill-Ohiopyle Road in Stewart Township. The house — now known as Kentuck Knob, so named because the area reminded the early settlers of Kentucky — rests near the top of a hill about 10 miles from where Pittsburgh department store

Robert P. Ruschak

The Wilsons took just over four months to lay the 800 tons or so of stone in a unique pattern for Kentuck Knob.

owner Edgar Kaufmann commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build Fallingwater. Begun in 1935, Fallingwater, with its series of cantilevered terraces extending out over the waterfalls of a mountain stream, is one of Wright's best known masterpieces.

"Mr. Hagan took me down to Fallingwater for a look at the stonework," says the elder Wilson. "He and Kaufmann were friends, and Mr. Hagan thought of getting the stone for his own home from the quarry near Fallingwater. Eventually, he decided against the idea because it would have been too expensive. Instead, he resolved to use the stone found right on his own property."

Wilson and his son, then in his early 20s, began cutting the large boulders they found scattered around the property in September of 1954. After making a straight line across the surface of the rock, they'd dig a series of holes along the line with a stone pick. After finishing the hole with a mash hammer and point, they'd place metal wedges in the holes, along with metal shims to hold them in place, and hammer the wedges one at a time until the stone opened up.

"I sometimes split stone as large as an automobile," the elder Wilson admits with a gleam in his eye.

Although the father-and-son team got in only a couple of weeks of work before the snow started to fall, they managed to train a crew of four or five workers to split the stone for them before calling it quits for the winter. "It was too big a job for two men to split *and* lay the stone themselves," says the elder Wilson. Eventually, the crew would speed things up by learning to use a jackhammer to split the rock.

Robert P. Ruschak

Even the kitchen walls and closets are made of stone.

"I sometimes split stone as large as an automobile," the elder Wilson admits with a gleam in his eye.

Double Walls and Lots of Windowsills

Frank Lloyd Wright was 87 years old when he designed Kentuck Knob. At the same time, he was also working on the commission for another of his masterworks, New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Even so, Wright was so concerned about the details of his work at Kentuck Knob that he sent one of his assistants to western Pennsylvania with photos of the type of masonry pattern he wanted: two smaller stones sandwiched between two larger ones, then laid in an irregular, random pattern to replicate the rock strata found in nature.

As a test, the assistant had the elder Wilson lay a sample portion of a wall and ended up liking what he saw so much, he let the Wilsons proceed with the job. "Dad had never worked that particular kind of pattern before, but he picked up on it very well," says the younger Wilson.

When the father-and-son team first arrived the following spring, the cement had already set in the basement, and the outlines of the walls were laid out. "It certainly looked like we had our work cut out for us," remembers the younger Wilson. Even so, as fast as the stone splitting crew could haul the stone to the site, the Wilsons laid it up.

After preparing the stones by shaping and facing each piece of rock by hand, the Wilsons built double walls, 12 inches thick with two inches of insulation in between on three sides of the house. Only the back basement wall was built with a single layer. However, it too became a double wall when it reached the first floor of the building.

"We laid every piece of stone in that house," says the elder Wilson.

"I caught on real easy — but couldn't keep up with Dad, especially when laying the blocks," says his son.

Although the construction supervisor was on site each working day, he virtually gave the Wilsons a free hand, mainly because he didn't know that much about laying stone. At one time, when one of Wright's assistants came over to watch them work, he was so impressed with what he saw, he advised them to move to Arizona where Wright had Taliesin West, his Scottsdale winter encampment. "You'd make a fortune there," he said.

The father-and-son team were paid about $2,400 each for putting in eight-hour days, mostly without a break, for what amounted to about $5 an hour. During his four months on the job during the spring and summer of 1955, the elder Wilson claims to have worn out three pairs of shoes walking over the chipped stone that collected around the building.

The father-and-son team were paid about $2,400 each for putting in eight-hour days, mostly without a break, for what amounted to about $5 an hour.

"I liked working for Mr. Hagan," says the elder Wilson. "He'd often bring us ice cream on hot days until our supervisor discouraged him from letting us take a break. Those were the days when you worked eight hours straight through, with only a

Robert P. Ruschak

The massive stone fireplace exhibits the same pattern as the exterior walls: two smaller stones sandwiched between two larger ones, then laid in an irregular, random pattern to replicate the rock strata found in nature.

half hour off for lunch. Now, everybody takes a couple of breaks throughout the workday."

Both Wilsons claim that the hardest part of the job was bending over to dress or prepare the stone. "We were really glad to lay them up because it gave us a chance to stand up straight for a while," says the elder Wilson.

For the younger Wilson, the windowsills proved a real challenge. "That was the first time I ever used a hammer and chisel to turn a stone into a windowsill," he says. "And there are a heck of a lot of windowsills at Kentuck Knob."

After the job was finished, Wilson continued on as a stonemason until he retired in the late 1970s at age 67. His last official stone job was completing the home of architect Michael Molinar of Uniontown. However, Wilson does admit that he continued to take on an odd job here and there when asked.

> "I liked working for Mr. Hagan," says Jesse Wilson Sr. "He'd often bring us ice cream on hot days."

Jesse Wilson Jr. quit laying stone in 1961 after he built himself a service station which he later turned into a used car lot. When asked why he'd abandoned the family's long-standing craft, he explained that he realized how hard the work could be. "I'd see Dad come home almost every evening doubled over with aches and pains," he says.

A Bit Too Much Stone?

The Wilsons never got to meet the great, world-renowned architect, who did manage to visit Kentuck Knob while it was under construction—but never while they were at work. However, they have spoken with the present owner, Lord Palumbo of England, who bought the house from the Hagans in 1986. A multimillionaire property developer, Lord Palumbo served as chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain from 1989 to 1994.

The Palumbos, who seem to collect 20th century houses the way others collect stamps or coins, also own Farnsworth, which is a Mies van der Rohe house in Plano, Ill., and a double townhouse in Paris by Le Courbusier. Because the Palumbos visit Kentuck Knob so seldom, they've opened the house to public touring.

During one of his infrequent visits to his southwestern Pennsylvania home, Lord Palumbo asked the Wilsons if he could videotape an interview with them. With their acquiescence, the session was recorded outside on the grounds, appropriately with the house in the background. Near the end of their talk, Palumbo admitted to the Wilsons that he was "lost in admiration for what they had accomplished" and called the elder Wilson "a master stonemason."

While the videotape session marked the first time the younger Wilson had revisited Kentuck Knob, his father has returned to the site on several previous occasions. Although the elder Wilson now thinks the house has perhaps a bit too much stone ("even the kitchen walls and clothes closets are made of the stuff," he says), he's amazed to see his handiwork in retrospect.

> "I'd see Dad come home almost every evening doubled over with aches and pains," the younger Wilson says.

"The place is holding up pretty well," he says. "At the time we were working on it, we didn't give it much thought. Now, it's something I'm very proud of." His son is just as amazed, saying it's one of the most unusual jobs he ever undertook.

The Family Patriarch

As to the elder Wilson, he's now content to live in his own house in Markleysburg and serve as the family patriarch. "We've got an army now of seven children, 26 grandchildren, and 52 great-grandchildren," he says.

One of his grandchildren, at least, seems to have carried the stonemason tradition on to yet another generation of Wilsons. Jesse Wilson Jr.'s son Randy laid the stone on his own home and, according to his father, "did a pretty nice job."

"I guess it must run in the family," says the younger Wilson.

Fast approaching his 90th birthday, the elder Wilson is still agile and mentally alert. "You can tell by my age that hard work never killed anybody," he says with a chuckle. N&T

Born and raised in southwestern Pennsylvania about 25 miles northwest of Kentuck Knob, Dave Zuchowski is a free-lance writer who has written about both Kentuck Knob and its more famous sibling, Fallingwater—and has an almost equal affinity for both. Since learning about the labor-intensive craft of stonemasonry from the Wilsons, Zuchowski hopes the closest he ever gets to the occupation is listening to his old Rolling Stones albums on his record player.

Turning Trash into Treasure:

Recycling from a Waste Stream Builds a House

Chris Chmiel

By Michelle Gorman

A young Ohio couple builds a dream house on a foundation of society's throwaways.

Southeastern Ohio can be very deceiving.

At first glance, these rolling foothills of the Appalachian Mountains seem idyllic. Farmers strive to produce corn and soybeans while their neighbors raise dairy and beef cattle. Acres of national forest land beckon city and country folk alike to come hike, hunt, camp, and birdwatch. People still wave or nod as they pass each other on gravel roads.

But hidden in these hills is an insidious problem common to rural (and poor) areas: illegal trash dumping. Ravines located just off bucolic county roads are often the final resting places for discarded refrigerators, leaking car batteries, even an occasional arm chair, not to mention recyclable plastic bags brimming with household garbage.

Inheriting a Dumpsite

While rural trash hauling is available and not outrageously expensive, some still have an "out-of-sight/out-of-mind" attitude. Toss it out the car window, and it's forgotten. Never mind that the castoff item becomes someone else's burden.

Chris Chmiel

What looks like a dumpsite for abandoned tires is the beginning of a home for Michelle Gorman and husband Chris Chmiel.

My first experience with trash dumping came three years ago, shortly after my husband, Chris, and I purchased 17 acres in southwestern Athens County, Ohio, where I work as the Athens County Convention & Visitors Bureau marketing director. Chris is co-director of Community Food Initiatives, a local nonprofit agency. When the realtor showed us the property, the lone massive oak amid young forest trees and the ramshackle yet romantic red barn immediately captivated us. The front yard, overgrown with multiflora roses and thistle, showed promise as a garden site. The long-abandoned orchard offered apple and pear trees aching to be pruned. It was mid-August. By the end of the month, it was ours.

We attacked the place with a vengeance, mowing down the invasive shrubs, cleaning out the barn, and

scrapping old metal we found here and there. We even converted the 1958 Skyline trailer that came with the property into a habitable space. We figured we were living better than most of the world, even if it was in a 37-year-old mobile home with a leaky roof and no insulation.

And then we discovered it in a tangle of weeds, grapevines, and even more multiflora rose bushes: our very own dumpsite. It was complete with large appliances, burned-out televisions, car parts (engines included), clothing, and bag after bag of cans, bottles, and plastic containers. We eventually cleaned up the site and bulldozed over the remains, but it got us thinking about one item in particular that was prevalent in our dump: worn-out car tires.

Chris Chmiel

Volunteers begin the arduous process of pounding earth into the recycled tires to build a foundation.

While rural trash hauling is available and not outrageously expensive, some still have an "out-of-sight/out-of-mind" attitude. Toss it out the car window, and it's forgotten.

According to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Buckeye state generates more than 12 million of these scrap tires annually. While some are recycled or disposed of properly, the Ohio EPA estimates that more than 100 million tires are in stockpiles or illegal dumps across the state. These unmonitored, abandoned piles result in hazards to public health and the environment, including toxic fires and the creation of breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Fortunately, the Ohio legislature took action against the growing problem, passing a bill in 1997 to regulate used tires. But along Appalachian streambeds and rural roadsides, scrap tires abound. And it's not just in Appalachia. People in the U.S. discard some 250 million tires each year. As the problem grows, people fortunately seem to be coming up with more and more ingenious solutions.

Building an Earthship

In the early 1990s, we were inspired by the story of architect Michael Reynolds. Reynolds founded Solar Survival Architecture, a company in Taos, N.M., that designs and builds sustainable homes known as "Earthships" out of tires, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. He has also been instrumental in the construction of numerous such houses in the southwestern United States, including a luxurious home in Colorado for actor Dennis Weaver.

The whole point of Earthships, in the words of the anonymous author of the Earthship web page, is "to create a dwelling that lives with the land, not on top of it." To accomplish the goal of building a self-sufficient structure, these houses meet their occupants' energy needs in a number of earth-friendly ways. They utilize passive solar design, such as incorporating large south-facing windows and skylights, and they employ renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind power. Year-round indoor Earthship gardens are watered by the "greywater" that goes down the house's drains and are fertilized by sewage either composted or burned to a dust by special toilets.

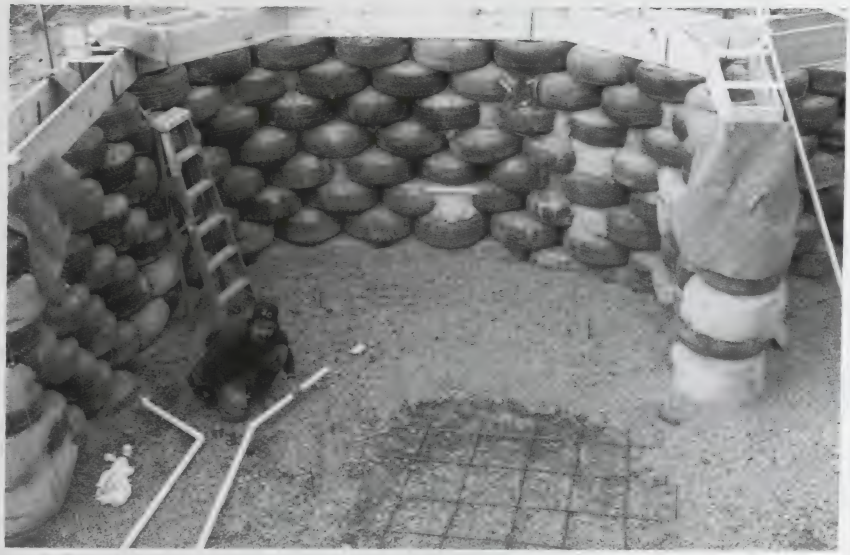
Earthships also take advantage of the thermal mass properties of large, dense building materials, such as tires packed with earth which serve as the house's strong, load-bearing foundation walls. These tires tend to absorb heat during the day and release it at night. And, of course, by using tires as a construction material, Earthships created a use for a good portion of the trash we'd inherited.

So once we became landowners — and with a tire deluge as impetus — we decided

Chris Chmiel

Volunteer Christopher Norman makes sure the tires go in level.

to construct our own "tire house." We needed shelter and saw the used car tire as an environmental and resourceful alternative to poured walls or concrete block. Of course, we had to modify Reynolds' design, one that worked for the dry summers and sunny winters of the Southwest but would not fare as well in Appalachian Ohio with its greater humidity and fewer sunny days during the winter. Unlike most Earthships — which are often one-story affairs partially bermed with earth — our home has a full basement plus two floors framed above it.



Chris Chmiel

Once the tire foundation was laid and before a concrete floor could be poured, Robin Kelly helped place an extensive pipe and gravel drainage system in the basement. Forms for the concrete lintels are visible along the top course of tires.

In addition to turning to Michael Reynolds' books on building Earthships, such as the 1990 volume, *Earthship: How to Build Your Own,* we called on the expertise of Carl Bauer, who guided us through all the stages of constructing the tire walls. Not only had Bauer worked for years as a contractor in the Cincinnati area, he had also built his own Earthship in the mid-1990s, just after moving to Athens County.

The primary materials for the foundation of our tire house came to us free of cost: used car tires, soil from the excavated site, cardboard, and aluminum cans. The tires we retrieved from our dumpsite were a start, but we didn't have enough to finish the job. We immediately got the word out that we needed scrap tires. Surprisingly, despite the widespread problem of illegal tire dumping, the EPA-enforced regulations surrounding their disposal make it difficult to obtain scrap tires. Specifically, the use of tires in home construction is not officially approved by the Ohio EPA, though old tires are frequently recycled into playground equipment and are called upon to prevent soil erosion in stream embankments. Consequently, we relied on a small tire repair shop, friends, and neighbors seeking to part with their worn-down rubber rounds.

Chris Chmiel

Once the floor was poured, "mudding" could begin. Gaps were filled with pop cans and beer bottles, then a mixture of straw, Portland cement, water, and soil was used to cover both the interior and exterior of the tire foundation.

In June of 1997, we broke ground for the house site. A backhoe scooped out bucket after bucket of clay, sandstone, and shale, leaving us with a 32-foot-by-24-foot hole.

Callused Hands and Bulky Biceps

The next month, we began what was to become a laborious four-month process of "pounding tires." Armed with sledgehammers, wheelbarrows, buckets, and shovels, Chris and I spent an entire summer constructing the foundation of our home. We carefully laid out each "course" — or horizontal row — of tires, much the same way as a builder would set up concrete block. We then packed each tire with 350 pounds of dirt. We hauled the dirt in buckets and wheelbarrows, pouring it into the center first, then using an eight-pound sledgehammer to pack the soil into the tire's hollow interior. Taking anywhere from 20 minutes to a half-hour, this "pounding" part produced callused hands and bulky biceps. It also attracted the curiosity of friends, many of whom decided to supply inkind goods (tires) and services (physical labor). Some

> Many of our friends decided to supply inkind goods (tires) and services (physical labor). Some days, we had enough help that it felt like an Amish barn raising.

days, we had enough help that it felt like an Amish barn raising.

After we completed the first course of tires, we spaced the second accordingly. In order to pack the subsequent courses of tires, we used recycled cardboard, feed sacks, and dog food bags to keep the dirt from falling though the layers. We ultimately used over 350 tires to construct foundation walls that were three feet thick and ranged from eight to four-feet high. We also installed an extensive pipe-and-gravel system to contend with Ohio's moister climate. We placed drains behind the foundation and underneath the concrete slab in order to draw any runoff away from the dwelling. We completed the process by spreading gravel three feet high behind the foundation walls. Then days before Thanksgiving of that year, we poured the cement slab of the basement, joining the tire walls to solid flooring. A concrete lintel was also poured on top of the tires so that two more levels could be framed up.

Chris Chmiel

Michelle Gorman packs in mud on an exterior wall.

By December, we began erecting posts, beams, and walls. The lumber, all rough-cut, is from a local sawmill. The four posts (two are maple, one is black locust, and one is white oak) are actually large logs felled from our woods and that of a neighbor's, all hauled out by hand with log tongs. The locally milled poplar siding will be nailed up this spring. We intend to use recycled materials wherever possible as well as nontoxic paints and carpeting.

When the green baked enamel roofing was nailed down in the spring of 1998, we were finally under cover. Then, it was time to finish the foundation walls.

The next stage, called "mudding," required the tedious mixing of straw, Portland cement, water, and soil into a messy yet malleable mix. With bare hands, we slugged the "mud" onto the interior and exterior of the tire foundation, pushing the mixture into gaps and smoothing it over into a more polished look. First we plugged recycled beer and pop cans into large gaps, with a hefty amount of "mud" plastered over them. We then covered the walls with 6 mil black plastic and sheets of metal lath, or the mesh used to support plaster, readying the surface for the finish coat: stucco.

Both interior and exterior walls received a generous coating of stucco. Carefully spread, smoothed, and shaped with mason's trowels, the stucco blend consisted of water, Portland cement, sand, lime, and fiber shards. It took the entire summer of 1998 to complete the "scratch" or base coat, with the subsequent two coats slated for sometime this spring.

> The whole point of Earthships, in the words of the anonymous author of the Earthship web page, is "to create a dwelling that lives with the land, not on top of it."

Geoff Greenfield

The unusable portion of the dumpsite awaits transportation to the county landfill.

On Our Way to Energy Independence

Working full-time away from home means that building our house is a very long-term project, so we currently live in the basement of our 1,700-square foot home. The temperature, even on blustery January days, hasn't fallen below 55 degrees. The tire walls maximize solar energy while maintaining comfortable temperatures even when it's below freezing — or reaching the 90-degree mark.

We will likely complete the house over the next year, working evenings and weekends to put on the finishing touches. When all is said and done, we'll have a full basement with a utility room, a great room and bathroom on the first floor, and two bedrooms and an office on the second level.

The ultimate goal is for our home to be completely self-sufficient, relying on solar electric power. With hot water fueled by an "on-demand" propane heater, a composting toilet, a cast-iron wood stove, and ample passive solar energy, we are well on our way to independence from coal-burning electricity. Citrus trees, cacti, and hot pepper plants already thrive in the south-facing windows. In time, we will have vegetable and fruit plants growing year-round in indoor planters scattered throughout the basement.

We are convinced that recycling tires, cans, and cardboard for use in alternative home construction is certainly a feasible, economical, if labor-intensive option. Though it certainly has taken us longer to build our own home, we do not have a 30-year mortgage looming in our future. And we are both proud to say that we have designed and constructed our dream house before we have left our 20s. Still, I would advise anyone entertaining the notion of building his or her own home to be prepared for the physical, mental, and financial strain that is inevitable. Patience, a sense of humor, and learning to live with less help tremendously.

Michelle Gorman

Framing nears completion on the Gormans' dream house.

We realize that we have scratched only the surface of the trash problem endemic to poor, rural Appalachian areas. Removing and reusing these free discarded items from our creeks and back roads help to beautify Appalachian Ohio. We can celebrate our hardwood forests, gently rolling hills, and rich clay soils instead of tainting them.

Meanwhile, our vacated trailer, which served us well for four winters, sits in the distance, waiting for a new custodian. N&T

Michelle Gorman and Chris Chmiel have just begun painting the interior walls and ceilings of their home. By summer, they hope to spend more time in the garden and marketing Pawpaw Pleasures, their frozen pawpaw pulp business.

Home

Nothing matches—
rooms of drywall, rooms of paneling,
vinyl windows, wood windows,
old paneled doors and new hollow-core,
I wrap them about me like an afghan
knitted from leftover pieces.

It is world enough—
distant mountains marking life's edge,
vegetable garden tucked with a green quilt,
flower beds pointed with color like a Cézanne—
remember, Marilyn tells me, he missed his mother's
funeral because the light was right—
herb bed studded with sage, carpeted with thyme.

I drink it like my morning cup of tea
awakening desire. All day it swims within me,
long strokes and steady breath carrying me to shore,
lungs and heart swelling with longing.

My sister says travel, see the world while you're able.
She cannot know the world lines the study walls,
squirms beneath the garden soil,
lifts its wings over the pasture,
sees its mate spiraling against a summer sky,
and sings, sings, sings.

—Connie Jordan Green

A frequent contributor to Now & Then, *Connie Jordan Green teaches writing at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She has had poetry published in many periodicals as well as in several anthologies. She also writes fiction and books for young people, including* The War at Home *and* Emmy, *both from Margaret McElderry Imprint (formerly of Macmillan).*

ETSU NewsCASS

Spring 1999

Newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services • East Tennessee State University

Encyclopedia of Appalachia Project Receives Major NEH Grant

The **National Endowment for the Humanities** has awarded $82,600 to the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services for the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* project for the 1999-2000 year. The Endowment also invited the Center to apply for a second year of funding by this summer's application deadline. This funding helps keep the project moving forward on schedule and continues the excellent work of managing editor **Jill Oxendine.** The Center and all our advisory and editorial colleagues in this project deeply appreciate the Endowment's endorsement of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia.*

In other *Encyclopedia* project news, section editors, the editorial board, representatives of the University of Tennessee Press, and the Center's editorial staff for the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* met on March 18, just prior to the annual Appalachian Studies Association meeting at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Va. After reviewing the project's progress, 35 section editors met in groups to discuss overlapping and additional entries for their sections. Assignment of entries to the hundreds of writers who will be involved in the project will begin in July. The nearly 60 attendees agreed that the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* was creating new ways of thinking about Appalachia and may spawn new areas for research.

Rudy Abramson

Roberta Campbell (l), section editor on Race, Ethnicity, and Identity, listens as William Turner (r), editorial board member, makes a point during the recent *Encyclopedia* editorial meeting.

Now & Then Takes a Break

Now & Then magazine will go on hiatus for one issue this coming winter, and *NewsCASS,* the Center's newsletter, will be distributed separately from the magazine starting this summer. Center staff came to these decisions after having reviewed the results of a recent survey mailed to all Center members. While the summer 1999 **Appalachian Lives** issue, complete with winners of the **1999 Appalachian Fiction Competition,** will appear as planned, the winter 1999

Continued on page 2.

Archives of Appalachia

Recent Acquisitions P. 3

Carroll Reece Museum

First Ladies Serve as Patrons P. 4

Regional Resources Institute

New Contact Information for Center Offices P. 3

Revised *Now & Then* Publication Schedule

Theme	Deadline	Publication Date
1999		
Lives	March 1	August
Health Care	November 1	April 2000
2000		
Appalachian Accents	March 1	August
Museums & Archives	July 1	December
Rivers & Valleys	November 1	April 2001

A complete listing and description of **upcoming *Now & Then* themes** can be found at http://cass.etsu.edu/N&T/themes.htm.

Visit *News & Notes* at http://cass.etsu.edu/News&Notes.htm for **up-to-the-minute news** about Center activities and other conferences, meetings, performances, and contests related to the Appalachian region.

NewsCASS, the newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (Archives of Appalachia, Carroll Reece Museum, and Regional Resources Institute) at East Tennessee State University, is published three times a year. Center and FORM members receive *NewsCASS* as part of the benefits of membership.

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
Jean Haskell Speer, Director

Archives of Appalachia
Georgia Greer, Office Manager
Ned Irwin, University Archivist
Norma Myers, Curator
Ed Speer, Archive Assistant
Marie Tedesco, Appalachian Archivist

Reece Museum
Margaret S. Carr, Asst. Director/ Registrar
Nancy Jane Earnest, Media Specialist
Lisa Erwin, Office Manager
Harold F. Stewart Sr., Preparator
Blair H. White, Asst. Director/ Curator

Regional Resources Institute
Nancy Fischman, Mng. Editor, *Now & Then*
Rebecca Grindstaff, Office Manager
Stevan Jackson, Director, Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies
Charles Moore, Coordinator
Jill Oxendine, Managing Editor, *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*
Jack Tottle, Director, Country & Bluegrass Music Program
Jane Harris Woodside, Asst. Director & Editor, *Now & Then*

Research Associates
Richard Blaustein, Senior Research Fellow
Tess Lloyd, Research Associate
Neil Palmer, St. Andrews Society Fellow
Kathleen Curtis Wilson, Mary Mildred Sullivan Fellow

***NewsCASS* Staff**
Margaret Carr, Nancy Earnest, Nancy Fischman, and Jane Woodside

***Now & Then* continued from page 1.**

Appalachian Health Care issue of *Now & Then* will be postponed until the spring of 2000. **Appalachian Accents,** scheduled to feature the winners of the upcoming *Now & Then's* **Year 2000 Appalachian Poetry Competition,** will still be published the summer of 2000.

The challenges associated with designing and maintaining a web page in the absence of additional staff or budgetary support provided the impetus for the recent survey. Along with publishing *NewsCASS* and *Now & Then*, the Center's ongoing publication program also includes *News & Notes.* Now posted on the Center's web site at http://cass.etsu.edu/News&Notes.htm, this biweekly newsletter publicizes late-breaking items of interest to those involved in regional studies.

The survey polled Center members as to whether they preferred receiving *Now & Then* two times a year or three times a year. Nearly 70 percent wanted the magazine to continue its current publication schedule. The Center staff decided that postponing the winter 1999 issue would both honor the membership's wishes and give Center editors the time they need to work on the web site and other publication-related projects. Members will still receive their three issues of the magazine as a benefit of membership in the Center. Renewal notices will not be sent out until spring of 2000.

"The web is one of the most important and exciting ways we can communicate with our members and with the world," notes *Now & Then* managing editor Nancy Fischman. "It just hasn't been possible for us to find the time between issues that it takes to do a really good job getting well-designed, useful pages up on the Internet."

The one-issue sabbatical will also give Center staff members time to work on a comprehensive index to the last 15 years of *Now & Then.* "There's so much valuable material in *Now & Then* that's nearly impossible to access without a good index," observes Jane Woodside, Center assistant director and *Now & Then* editor. "We're hoping to remedy that problem."

We have redesigned *NewsCASS.* The frequency of the newsletter will probably be reduced from three to two times a year. "We hope that all the wonderful supporters of the Center's work will benefit from the new informational resources this short hiatus will permit us to develop," says Center director Jean Haskell Speer.

The Regional Research Institute and the Archives of Appalachia Move into New Quarters

With the completion of East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) new Sherrod Library, both the Center's **Regional Resources Institute (RRI)** offices and the Archives of Appalachia have moved.

The RRI offices house staff for the ***Encyclopedia of Appalachia*** **project and** ***Now & Then*** **magazine as well as the Governor's School for Tennessee Heritage, the Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies, the Appalachian Studies minor, and the ETSU Bluegrass and Country Music programs.** These offices have temporarily moved to Warf-Pickel Hall, Room 209, from Room 119 in the old Sherrod Library on ETSU's campus in Johnson City, Tenn. When the old Sherrod Library building has been renovated, the RRI will move back to more spacious quarters in its old home. Work on the old Sherrod, however, is not scheduled to begin before July 1999 at the earliest.

The mailing address, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers should remain the same for those contacting the RRI from off campus. If you should experience difficulty in reaching RRI staff by phone, call ETSU's main switchboard at 423-439-1000 and ask the operator to connect you.

The Archives of Appalachia re-opened on February 1 and has completed the transfer of collections and staff into its new home. The archives is housed on the fourth floor (Room 422) of the new Sherrod Library on the ETSU campus.

This new space offers greatly increased storage and processing areas for handling the archives' extensive holdings of Appalachian and ETSU collections. Researchers will find an attractive public reading room in which to carry on their work. Among the new features are what some are calling the best view on campus — a view that overlooks much of the university and Johnson City. There are even two rocking chairs to provide restful seating. The rocking chairs are gifts from the archives first two directors, **Richard Kesner** and **Ellen Garrison.**

An event marking the opening of the archives' new facility will be announced later this year. In the meantime, the archives is open to researchers Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Remember....

Until the old Sherrod Library is renovated, the RRI offices will be located in Room 209, Warf-Pickel on ETSU's campus.

Phone numbers: 423-439-5348 or 423-439-7865.

Archives of Appalachia: Selected Recent Acquisitions

CAROL BERRY COLLECTION

c. 1944-45 .1 ft.

Consists of 48 black and white photographs documenting Okinawa near the end of World War II. Donated by Carol Berry, Elizabethton, Tenn.

A. A. BRUNER PAPERS

1852-92 .1 ft.

Photocopy of Bruner's journal, which describes his travels through the Carolinas, and on to Cuba. Also includes some family information such as births and deaths. Donated by Dr. James Hite, Kingsport, Tenn.

ERNEST SEEMAN COLLECTION

Undated 1 ft. Addition.

Consists of typescripts of two book manuscripts written by Seeman. One, an unpublished manuscript titled "Tumbling Creek: Its Past and Present," is related to Unicoi Co., Tenn., history. The other manuscript, titled "Tobacco Town," was eventually published in 1978 as *American Gold* and relates to the socio-economic influence of tobacco on a southern town. Donated by Elizabeth Seeman, Ernest's wife.

In addition, the archives thanks the following for the recent donations of materials: Pat Arnow, Durham, N.C.; Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, ETSU; Hazel Scott Craft, Kingsport, Tenn.; Will Davis, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Rolly Harwell, ETSU; Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, Abingdon, Va.; John L. Kiener, Johnson City, Tenn.; Rachel McAllister, Gastonia, N.C.; Doreen McBride; Robert Nave, Johnson City, Tenn.; Frank B. Williams, Jr., Johnson City, Tenn.

Briefly...

Center Prepares All-America City Application

Center staff was part of a team from the Tri-Cities, Tenn.-Va., area which prepared an application for the All-America City competition sponsored by the National Civic League. Involved in researching and writing the application were **Lee Phillips,** Center research associate, **Jean Haskell Speer,** Center director, and **Jill Oxendine,** managing editor for the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia.* **Rebecca Watson,** professor of sociology at Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, Va., was also part of the research and writing effort.

The application required a survey of the 43 municipalities, 13 counties, and two states included in the designated region to write a community profile, assess the region based on a civic index, describe the region's civic infrastructure, and provide three projects that demonstrated regional cooperation. If selected, the Tri-Cities, Tenn.-Va., region will be the first region, rather than a single city or town, ever chosen in the competition.

ETSU Bluegrass Band Plays the Kennedy Center

The East Tennessee State University Bluegrass Band performed in concert in February at the Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington, D.C., to an enthusiastic audience. The group was selected to perform Tennessee favorites such as "Rocky Top" and "Tennessee Waltz" by U.S. Sen. **Bill Frist** for the Millennium Stage State Days Series, part of the Kennedy Center's Performing Arts for Everyone initiative.

Students from the Bluegrass and Country Music Program chosen to perform at the Kennedy Center were **Becky Buller,** fiddle; **Martha Scanlan,** guitar; **Beth Lawrence,** bass; **Jeremy Fritts,** guitar; **Thomas M. Sneed,** mandolin; and **J.P. Mathes,** banjo. They were accompanied on the trip by **Christian Seguret,** a native of France who is assistant director of ETSU's Bluegrass and Country Music Program.

The performance was part of activities put on by the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance during the "Birth of Country Music Celebration."

ETSU Blugrass Band Performs in France

ETSU Bluegrass Band members spent 10 days performing in France this past March. The group — composed of students **Becky Buller** (fiddle) and **Jeremy Fritts** (guitar) as well as Bluegrass and Country Music Program assistant director and French native **Christian Seguret** (mandolin) — was hosted by the Alsacian town of Lingolsheim, near Strasbourg.

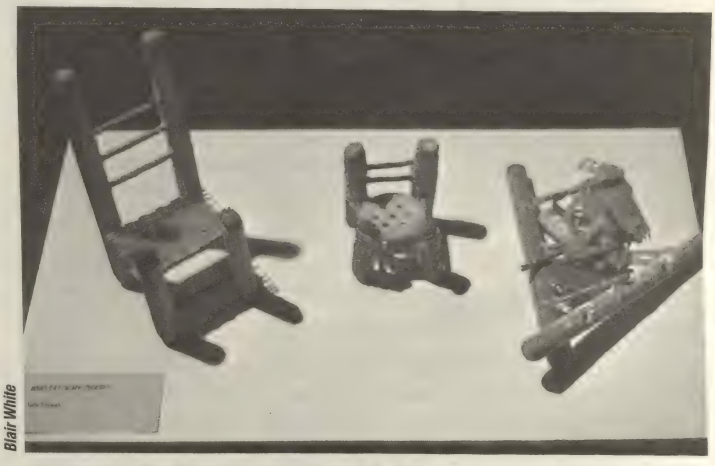
The group presented bluegrass music to local children, did a public conference about bluegrass and country music, and participated, along with European musicians Olivier Andres and Thierry Massoubre, in the annual Lingolsheim Country Festival. There they performed before an enthusiastic crowd of 3,000. The three ETSU musicians also participated on a French television show that reached an estimated million viewers. Both Buller and Seguret were invited to participate in a recording session for French bandleader Lionel Wendling.

Three First Ladies Serve as Patrons for Reece Museum

Honorary patrons for the **American Homespun for the President's House Exhibit,** from June 10 - August 8 at the Center's Reece Museum, will be **Martha Sundquist,** first lady of Tennessee; **Carolyn Hunt,** first lady of North Carolina; and **Roxanne Gilmore,** first lady of Virginia. They are expected to attend various events held in conjunction with the exhibit. This exhibit and associated programming have been made possible through the support of the **Tennessee Humanities Council.**

Chair Design Competition at Reece

In conjunction with the recent **Please Be Seated** exhibit, the Reece Museum hosted Northeast Tennessee's first **Incredible Edible Chair Design Competition** in March. The competition, sponsored by the American Society of Interior Designers' local chapter, featured entries constructed entirely of edible items. Winners were **Jill Webster,** first prize; **Jill Hanggi,** second prize; and **Julie Schwab,** third prize. Chairmaker **Curtis Buchanan** of Jonesborough, Tenn., and Museum assistant directors **Margaret Carr** and **Blair White** served as judges. ASID contributed $750 to the local chapter of **Habitat for Humanity** and to the **Honduran Greenwood Project**.



Blair White

"Who Sat in My Chair?" by third-prize winner Julie Schwab was an entry in the Incredible Edible Chair Design Competition held in March at the Reece Museum.

1999

April 29 - May 30

Sponsored by First Tennessee Bank, the Johnson City Area Arts Council and the Center's Reece Museum, **the First Tennessee Bank Art Competition and Exhibition** is a juried exhibition of the finest in regional arts and sculpture. It includes work by established as well as emerging artists. The juror, Xenia Z. Zed, is executive director of the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, Ga. She is an alumna of ETSU (B.F.A., 1975) and works as a professional artist in addition to teaching and participating in other arts-related activities. For more information, call 423-439-4392.

May 7

FORM will take a one-day trip to the McClung Museum at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville to view **Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur,** a major traveling exhibit organized by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, Pa. The $20 registration fee includes transportation to Knoxville, Tenn., and admission to the exhibit. Call 423-439-4392 for more information or to register.

May 11

First Tennessee Bank Art Competition Meet the Artists Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Reece Museum. For more information, call 423-439-4392.

May 15

Jonesborough artist **Tom Root** will present a one-day **Figure Drawing Workshop** on Saturday, May 15 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Reece Museum during the First Tennessee Bank Show.

Root is a popular workshop leader who has an exceptional talent for rendering the human body. The workshop is open to the public, and a live, clothed model will be present. There is a fee of $40, which does not include supplies.

Nancy Jane Earnest

Tom Root

June 8 - August 8

The 1999 **Challenge Quilts** exhibit promises to be a treat for the eyes as **Blue Ridge Quilters Guild** members seek to use all their scraps in quilts which employ the string quilting or string piecing technique.

String quilting employs assorted narrow strips of fabric (strings) and shorter pieces (crumbs) in block form or as applique. For this challenge, Guild members must use the string piecing method on 25 percent of the quilt or wall hanging. An old craft for modern times, string piecing is one technique used in the past out of necessity when fabric was not plentiful. For more information, call 423-439-4392.

June 10 - August 8

American Homespun for the President's House at the Reece Museum. By decorating the White House with handcrafted fabrics, **Ellen Axson Wilson** (the wife of the 28th president of the United States) focused widespread attention on the lives, financial needs, and talents of mountain women. This exhibition provides an opportunity to view striking examples of early 20th century American hand weaving by **Allie Josephine Mast** and **Elmeda McHargue Walker.**

No known textiles or baskets remain at the White House from Ellen Wilson's decoration of the president's bedroom, known as the Blue Mountain Room. The exhibit consists of both the textiles and basketry that were originally offered for sale by the Southern Industrial Educational Association (SIEA) and later given to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Other items in the exhibit came from descendants of Josephine Mast and from the permanent collection at the Woodrow Wilson House. This exhibit and associated programming have been made possible

through the support of the **Tennessee Humanities Council.** For more information, call 423-439-4392.

June 10

American Homespun for the President's House Reception and Panel Discussion. Crafts specialist **Andrew Glasgow,** folklorist **Jan Davidson,** historian **Shannon Wilson,** and guest curator **Kathleen Curtis Wilson** will discuss the history of the items in the exhibit and Appalachian crafts in general. For more information, call 423-439-4392.

June 13 - July 9

The Governor's School for Tennessee Heritage, coordinated by the Center, will take place on ETSU's campus. Fifty-six gifted high school students from across Tennessee will study the state's history and culture by attending classes, working on hands-on projects, and going on field trips. For more information, call Georgia Greer at 423-439-4338.

June 21

ETSU's **Senior Bluegrass Band** will be playing in the Cave of the D.P. Culp Center from 5 to 8 p.m. for a dinner in connection with a high school guidance counselors' retreat.

June 24

The next **After Hours Cabaret at the Reece** will be held Thursday, June 24, from 5:30 p.m. until 8 p.m . **The Appalachian Trio** is composed of **Jane LaPella** on piano, **Jim Benelisha** on cello, and **Kellie Brown** on violin. Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m., and the performance begins at 6 p.m. For more information, call 423-439-4392.

Preview of Alumni Exhibit at Reece Museum

Suzanne Stryk: Natural Domain Series

August 12 - October 17

Suzanne Stryk earned her Master of Arts in painting from ETSU in 1990 and has lived in Bristol, Va., for more than a decade. A native Chicagoan, Stryk has exhibited throughout the East Coast and has worked as a free-lance scientific illustrator. Stryk's interest in depicting environmental subjects is apparent in her work: the use of insects, pods, and greenery.

"Insects interest me because of their strange yet familiar forms, distinct from yet so connected to the human world. Ever since I came to the Appalachian region, I've been struck by the jewel-like beauty of the common green June beetles invading our summer lawns and fields in their humming droves and awed by the unique variation of each beetle. And in May of 1995, I witnessed a most remarkable event of thousands of 13-year cicadas emerging from the earth to mate in an area which on the map was at one time intended to be flooded. Such experiences of both place and animal life are the source of the *Natural Domain Series.*"

Landscapes by Gary F. Paduch

August 14 - October 17, 1999

Although currently a resident of Florida, Gary Paduch's depictions of his East Tennessee heritage clearly illustrate his love of the region. He graduated from ETSU in 1964 with a degree in physical education, but soon became interested in a career in art. He is largely self-taught and has attended workshops and the Art Student's League in New York City. A disciplined observer, he is greatly influenced by Winslow Homer, Andrew Wyeth, the early American impressionists, and Edward Hopper.

"Realistic or abstract, all painters paint the things around them. Painting is a worrisome thing. Explaining it is even more worrisome. It is an endless discussion. Once, I was told by an irate teacher to just shut up and paint. I have heeded that good advice over the years . . . most of the time. As I get older, it seems increasingly more important to follow that advice."

Calendar

July 5 - July 24

The three-week **Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies credit course** will take place at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Enrollment is closed.

July 24 - August 7

The inaugural two-week **non-credit Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies program,** sponsored by the schools of continuing studies both at ETSU and at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, will focus this year on Folklife Studies in Scotland. For more information, call 423-439-8795.

Membership Information

Membership Levels:

- ❑ Student Associates $10 (for undergraduate and graduate students)
- ❑ Friends $20
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- ❑ Associates $50
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- ❑ Country and Bluegrass Music Program
- ❑ Encyclopedia of Appalachia

If you are employed by a matching gift company, your gift could be doubled or tripled. A list of participating companies is available from any Center office.

There are other ways to contribute to the Center. Please call us for information about alternative giving and for full benefits of membership.

Thank you for your support. Make checks payable to: ETSU/CASS and send to CASS, Box 70556, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City TN 37614-0556. For further information about membership call 423 439-5348.

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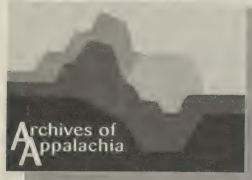
One-Day Excursion to View The Royal Tombs of Ur

The **Friends of the Reece Museum** is sponsoring a one-day **Discover Tour** to the McClung Museum at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on Friday, May 7 to view rare and exquisite Sumerian artifacts from the renowned, 4500-year-old royal cemetery at Ur. Ur is the city famed in the Bible as the home of the patriarch Abraham. **Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur** is a major traveling exhibition organized by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, Pa. Extravagant jewelry of gold, lapis lazuli, and carnelian, cups of gold and silver, bowls of alabaster, and extraordinary objects of art and culture were among the Mesopotamian treasures uncovered in the late 1920s by renowned British archaeologist C. Leonard Woolley in a joint expedition by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. One of the most spectacular discoveries in ancient Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq), the royal tombs at Ur opened the world's eyes to the full glory of ancient Sumerian culture (2600-2500 BC) at its zenith.

After having been divided in the 1920s and 1930s among the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the British Museum in London, and the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, the Ur treasures never again traveled — until now. The University of Pennsylvania collection will visit eight sites around the United States before its permanent reinstallation at that museum in 2001. The McClung Museum is the second venue on the **Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur** traveling exhibition and the only site in the southeastern United States.

Call the museum at 423-439-4392 for more information or to register.

Contact us ...



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Special Thanks to. . .

The Center announces the establishment of two prizes for outstanding Appalachian fiction. **The First Bank & Trust** of Abingdon, Va., has agreed to underwrite a $500 first prize, while the **University of Tennessee (UT) Press** will sponsor a $250 second prize for the Center's fiction contests. First Bank & Trust and UT Press have pledged funds not only for ***Now & Then's* 1999 Appalachian Fiction Competition** but also for all future contests.

Now & Then Magazine plans to organize a fiction competition every other year, beginning in 1999, with the winners being published in the summer issue. Look for the stories penned by this year's winners in the upcoming **Appalachian Lives** issue this summer. **Robert Morgan** served as the final judge.

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Reading the Landscape

An Interview with David Hill

David Hill is president of Hill Studio, P.C. of Roanoke, Va. Hill Studio is a 10-year-old firm specializing in architecture, landscape architecture, city planning, and historic preservation.

A native of Bent Mountain, Va., near Roanoke, Hill earned a master's degree in landscape architecture from Harvard University in 1988. In 1984, he received a bachelor's degree, also in landscape architecture, from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. There he studied under Jean Haskell Speer, now director of East Tennessee State University's Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. "She had a lot of influence on me," he says.

Recently, he spoke with **Now & Then** *editor Jane Harris Woodside.*

Now & Then: Do you think there is an Appalachian architecture?

David Hill: I've wrestled with that. There have been several attempts at an Appalachian architecture. The Adirondack style certainly qualifies. Another successful one, I think, is the architecture and landscape architecture of the early Blue Ridge Parkway designs.

The reason the early Blue Ridge Parkway was successful was that the designers took the forms and materials that had grown up in the region, forms and materials used by generations of farmers, and then using a very strictly disciplined Beaux-Arts tradition, they modeled their architecture after the things they found in the area.

Designers working in the Beaux-Arts tradition believed that if you want to design a great fountain, well, you go to Rome and measure the great fountains of ancient Rome. In the 1930s, many of the country's best designers found themselves out of work. The National Park Service put a lot of these unemployed designers to work on government projects, such as designing the Blue Ridge Parkway. When these architects got off the bus in Roanoke, where the Parkway was being designed, there weren't any great classical structures to study. If they wanted to go measure something, they could measure snake fences or old stone chimneys. So, in this case, professional architects created, in a very disciplined and intentional way, structures that had an Appalachian influence.

In general, I do not see firms around Appalachia attempting to practice an architecture that fits in with the mountains.

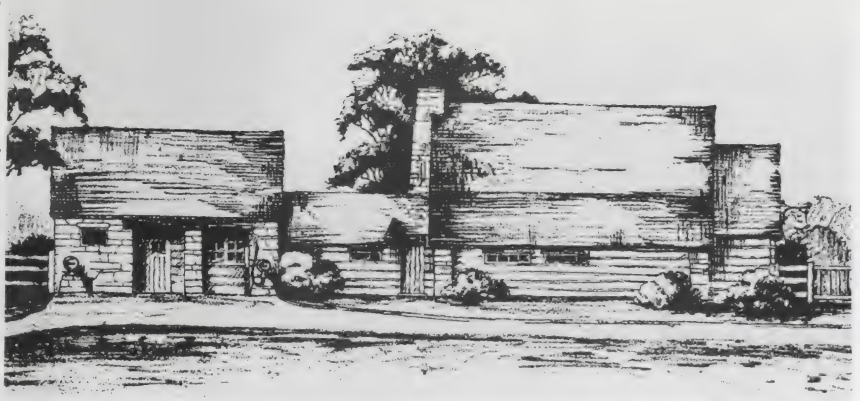
That's why the early Parkway gas stations — like the one that's now being used as a ranger station at the Peaks of Otter in Virginia — look a lot like log cabins. Those old gas stations look like *good* log cabins, you know, the ones that lasted.

Now & Then: So these gas stations were made out of what? Logs?

David Hill: Local materials, sure: logs, a wood shingle roof, and stone. You had big stone chimneys in the building, and you also had stone curbs. They even attempted to design stone gas pumps. Those stone gas pumps were in the early sketches, but they must have figured out it's hard to get stone to pump so they got away from that. To me, that was one of the first examples, one of the purest examples of a methodi-

cal attempt at Appalachian architecture.

In general, I do not see firms around Appalachia attempting to practice an architecture that fits in with the mountains. On the other hand, it is interesting to look at the great things that are happening out West. In the Western mountains, you're starting to see cities like Breckinridge, Colo., where they're using the big, heavy timbers and the greenways everywhere. But that doesn't necessarily have to be a Western thing. It makes sense that there can be mountain-appropriate buildings and landscapes here too.



Courtesy of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the National Park Service

Professional architects used local materials — including logs, shingle roofing, and stone — when designing early Blue Ridge Parkway buildings such as this 1934 gas station and coffee shop.

Now & Then: How would you know a "mountain-appropriate building" if you saw one?

David Hill: There are so many different possible interpretations between Georgia and Vermont that there may be a dozen different ways to do it right. As a landscape architect, I look for precedents.

For example, if you look at some of these narrow valleys between, say, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, you'll see that the farmer has used the public road that runs the length of the valley as a way to get to his fields. You'll come out of his barn and go down the public road and into his house. And then, there will be another barn and a chicken house over across the main road. That's just been the tradition.

The higher up you go in the cove farm's topography, the closer you come to touching God.

With this Ridge and Valley arrangement, which strings the farmhouse and its outbuildings along both sides of the road, you'll look at mailboxes and you'll sometimes see German names.

Now, if you're going from, say, Johnson City in Tennessee toward Unicoi County and Erwin and then you start up into those mountain passes, you'll see a different kind of arrangement. The farm will be situated in a cove rather than in one of those long, narrow valleys typical of the Ridge and Valley province. There, the farmhouse will be set back from the road. You'll have a private road coming off the public road and leading up to the house. Behind the house, there will be a series of barns. Above those barns, you'll have fields back up in the hollow. The farmer will have his own network of lanes that link all of his outbuildings. Very different style.

One thing that's really cool about both the Ridge and Valley and the cove farms is that often there will be a cemetery located on a prominent ridge. From that cemetery, you can see the entire farm.

Now & Then: I remember your saying that you feel that in the mountains, there is a kind of religiously influenced topography.

David Hill: Well, you can stand on some of these farms, especially the cove farms, in our region, and you can say, "Now look here: You've got these high points where the cemetery is usually located, then you've got the fields. As you continue to move down the mountainside, you've got a cluster of barns and houses, then the entrance road to the farm and finally the main road down to the village." So, starting from the public road and traveling in the opposite direction, you're moving through the world of man, then the world of nature and finally, you reach God at the very top. The higher up you go in the cove farm's topography, the closer you come to touching God.

Maybe there's something to it, and maybe there's not. There could be this metaphysical reason for this configuration, or there could be a very practical reason. Maybe you couldn't site the old houses on the hilltop because you couldn't get water up to the house.

What I have discovered is that if you look at houses a hundred years ago and at houses today, you see this whole new generation of houses, both in the Ridge and Valley province and in the coves, that are plopped up on the hilltop. Those houses have a view, and it's a commanding view. It's a real contrast to all of these older farmsteads, where there is a much more modest place for the human being inside these agricultural landscapes. That modest place really feels kind of comfortable to me.

In any case, paying attention to how people who have lived in a place for generations have placed their farms on the terrain shows the landscape architect how to site new things sensitively. If somebody asks you, "Can you build me a subdivision?" your first question should be: "Well, where is it?"

Now & Then: So how would you site a subdivision on Ridge and Valley terrain versus a cove?

David Hill: Let's start with the cove. In the cove — if you wanted to do this sensitively, if you wanted the new devel-

If somebody asks you, "Can you build me a subdivision?" your first question should be: "Well, where is it?"

opment to blend in with your neighbors — you might want to cluster the houses around a small stream and then have some common open space back up on the hillside above the houses. Then, maybe you'd put in some trails that went around to some really important spot that was up on the hilltop.

If you were going to site a new subdivision in the Ridge and Valley area, you would probably want to put a string of houses on one side of the main road. If you really had to, you could hide the rest of the houses back in the woods above the first line of houses. But you'd want to be sure to keep the fields across the road open to the view because the open fields are important to the experience of this landscape.

The mistake I usually see is that people site the new houses by dividing the land into these rectangularly shaped lots on both sides of the road. When you do that, you ruin the whole pattern.

David Hill

A typical Ridge and Valley landscape arrangement has the farmhouse and outbuildings strung along both sides of the road.

Now & Then: Speaking of siting new houses, let's talk about your firm's work in Matewan, W.Va. I must say, you're the only person I've ever heard who had a good word to say about coal camps.

David Hill: [Laughs] Well, I'm not the only guy. That's because you haven't met Stuart McGehee. McGehee runs a place called the Eastern Regional Coal Archives in Bluefield, W.Va. He's helped me to see that the architecture of the coalfields was not all that bad.

If you've ever looked at new towns like Seaside, Fla. — these new, small Victorian towns that have a lot of natural landscaping on the perimeter — you'll realize that the same kinds of ideas were floating around in the minds of people who planned coal camps 100 years ago. For example, in Benham, Ky., you'll see a beautiful square with a post office, a school, a townhall, a big city park, and roads going off in each direction to houses. Those houses had big front porches and fenced yards. Architecturally, the coal camp was really a Victorian town that landed all at once in these places.

There was a certain order that coal companies wanted for their towns. They wanted the towns to look civilized because if you were going to recruit somebody off the farm to work in the mines, you'd better build something pretty and neat. So there's a whole lot of attempts at designing very fancy buildings and handsome towns — at least up until the 1920s, at which point the coal economy began to go steadily downhill.

The original housing quality of coal towns was quite remarkable. Many of the original designs had ornamental details like cut glass doors. They had broad front porches and picket fences. The coal camp houses were high quality, but they were not easily maintained. That, of course, wasn't really a problem for the coal companies: With corporate ownership, you just hire a paint crew and paint your whole town.

As coal went into decline, the coal companies in many cases turned over ownership of the houses to individuals who, over the last 60 years or so, have practiced different levels of maintenance. Somebody would put on an addition, somebody else would tear down a fence so the original organization got lost as people customized their houses.

David Hill

In the southern mountain areas of Appalachia, farms are situated in coves away from public roads. Outbuildings and fields will be up the hollow, connected by a network of private lanes.

Now & Then: So the strength of the coal camps was mainly in the housing stock, not in how sensitively they sited these towns in the mountains?

David Hill: Oh yeah. Whole different model. The coal camp model is much more an urban model: We're going to create an ideal Victorian town. We'll have towns in the mountains that are structured just like New England villages or just like the ones out in Iowa. The only thing is that you can't site towns in these deep valleys with the sort of grid patterns typical of most Victorian towns. You have to make the plan a lot more linear. They just had to adapt the plan to the topography. It was all they could do.

Now our firm, Hill Studio, has done a town plan for the new Mate Creek community in Matewan, W.Va., and it's a town plan that's going to be a lot like a coal camp. There are about 30 lots in all, maybe a quarter acre each. We worked under a design arts grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that allowed us to study the aesthetic and

functional composition of West Virginia coal towns in order to plan the new housing development. Our client was the Matewan Development Center, which was headed up first by Paul McAlister and then later by David Reeves. The Center is a nonprofit corporation that tries to match people who've been displaced, either by floods or Army Corps of Engineers' work, with new pieces of land or new buildings.

Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Craft Memorial Library, Bluefield W.Va.

Porched houses lined the street of a 1920s-era coalfield housing development in the southern Appalachians.

Now & Then: Why specifically is Mate Creek being built?

David Hill: There was a terrible flood there in the early 1980s that wiped out an entire neighborhood. The Army Corps of Engineers came in and built walls to protect Matewan from the Tug Fork River. They raised the valley where the new Mate Creek community has been sited with 20 or so feet of fill so you could build houses there and they would not flood.

We had a blank slate, just a clean slate. After working with McGehee, we realized that we could put in a 21st century Victorian town that had a lot of the character of the early 20th century coal towns. We've produced a series of house plans that you can immediately take to a contractor and have built. If you want to build your own house with your own design, that's fine, but there's a set of guidelines that tells you how the house should look — for example, it has to have a front porch, it has to have a Victorian style to it, there are rules about the roof lines. These houses, of course, will have air conditioning and other modern conveniences and even [a bit sheepishly] vinyl siding. So anyway, Mate Creek feels to me like it will be a very good interpretation of an old model.

Now, in the case of projects like the Mate Creek housing development, we've got a precedent. We've got a great model that already exists. Where we're having to design new land uses that fit in with older land uses — that's where I believe we're on new ground.

What I see happening now is that you're seeing a lot more suburbanization in the region. It's happening especially in the Blue Ridge and in the Ridge and Valley areas where it's easy to build. As more and more areas get sewer and water, we are getting more and more people who want to build subdivisions.

There's no question about it. In addition to new suburbs, the Appalachian landscape is more and more becoming the host of new infrastructure, like big roads and powerlines. Those designers who are going to take these projects on responsibly have got to deal with this edge of practice where we're trying to deal with things like new roads and suburbs and powerlines and make them fit into this beautiful landscape. So that's one issue, I think, for the 21st century landscape architect.

Now & Then: Why is all of this important to you?

David Hill: What I see is that the Appalachian region has a lot of different traditions — music traditions, arts and crafts traditions, cooking and farming traditions — all of which are different from other places in the United States.

A lot of times, I'll get off the interstate and drive on little roads just to see how things have been placed on the land. There's a huge tradition here that tells us how to site something in the mountains. You can see it if you look closely at barns or mills or roads with old walls beside them or orchards.

All those things should inspire a design tradition. Taken together, there's a collective wealth of building traditions that just hasn't been adopted readily by local designers. And by designers, I mean city planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers, and interior designers.

It seems to me that in the case of the design arts, there's been a tendency to look east and north for inspiration. I don't think you necessarily have to do that. All of the people who are designing for the building industries, I believe, could find inspiration right here. We can design new things that blend in with the landscape and with what has gone before — in terms of form and the materials used, in the way that light gets into a building and what you see when you look out the window. We can look for inspiration within our own region. N&T

—JHW

Peter Giraudeau, Hill Studio

Plans for the new Mate Creek community in Matewan, W. Va., include quarter acre lots and Victorian style homes with modern conveniences in an interpretation of early 20th century coalfield towns.

Renovation
From Linoleum to Congoleum
A Memoir

by Jerry Richardson

Renovation fever strikes when residents buy their own homes in a company town.

A friend of mine, the poet James Goode, has said that the company house he grew up in Benham, Ky., had an insulation factor of R-0. James' description is also appropriate for the company house in Lynch, Ky., where I was raised — prior, that is, to the Era of Renovation.

Benham and Lynch sit side by side on Highway 119 in the east end of Harlan County. Benham was built by International Harvester, while Lynch was a U.S. Steel company town. Each was constructed early in the century when corporations were under a lot of pressure to provide better living conditions for their workers. For their time, both communities were state-of-the-art coal camps. This does not mean, however, that the houses were warm during the winter.

Carpenters were busy.
Electricians were busy.
Plumbers were busy.
And my father was busy.

Lynch is a community of terraced streets carved into the mountainside; there is almost no flat land in the entire town. At one time, over 10,000 people lived there. The houses which lined the terraces were bounded by streets on one side and steep hillsides on the other. It was a pretty town that was well-kept by U.S. Steel, and it was a nice place to grow up.

The bosses' houses, reflecting the social stratification of a corporate town, were large stone dwellings, opulent and ornate. They were built on streets with names like Highland Terrace, often referred to as "Silk Stocking Row." As children, we were reluctant to go near them.

The miners' houses were built of clapboard and came in several styles. There was a large two-story, rectangular, eight-room cracker box; an equally large two-story, six-room Cape Cod; a smaller two-story, six-room Cape Cod; and a one-story, four-room bungalow. Each house, with the exception of the bungalow, housed two families.

Most also had a front and a back porch as well as a small

Robert Richardson

A one-family bungalow contained four rooms. This house is in the original U. S. Steel coal camp condition.

Robert Richardson

This combination coalhouse/outhouse shows the ravages of time. Many of these outbuildings were torn down as indoor plumbing became the norm.

yard. There were no inside bathrooms, so families shared a combination outhouse-and-coalhouse with their neighbors. Residents learned to regulate bodily functions according to when their neighbors were in or out of the toilet.

When we moved to Lynch in 1949, our family of eight lived on High Street in one-half of an eight-room house. Matthew Wilson and his family of 10 occupied the other side. These were the years of Big Steel in the United States, and due to the booming demand for coal, our half-house was the only one available.

By the early 1960s, U.S. Steel sold the houses to the residents. Fortunately, we had moved a few years earlier to a small six-room Cape Cod on Church Street. We bought the whole house for $1,100. Prices varied according to the size of the house, and you had to live in the house to purchase it. Accordingly, some residents were only able to purchase half of a house. This proved interesting because some owners left their half in the original coal camp state while other owners redid their half with new windows, new siding, and a new roof.

Once pride of ownership arrived, the community changed. Company property was one thing. Private property would prove to be quite another.

Once pride of ownership arrived, the community changed. Property rights became paramount, renovation fever struck, and building contractors swarmed into town.

Property rights became paramount, renovation fever struck, and building contractors swarmed into town. Yards where neighborhood kids had once played were now off-limits. Fences went up, walls were erected, and short cuts were wiped out. Squabbles broke out over who owned what, and neighbors who had never had a cross word between them stopped speaking or started fighting.

None of this had occurred under company ownership—few people cared. Kids would play tackle football in someone's backyard, knock a baseball through someone's window, or nail a basketball goal to their coalhouse. Almost everybody had kids, and almost everybody was tolerant.

After the houses were sold, new homeowners spent a lot of money renovating. Then they spent more money renovating the renovation. Concrete patios were poured and torn up and poured again. Carports were put up, knocked down, and put up again. Walls came down, and walls went up. Carpenters were busy. Electricians were busy. Plumbers were busy. And my father was busy.

My father was busy because he wouldn't hire anything done. He could do it all, and if he couldn't, he did it anyway. My mother was his accomplice. When a wall came down, she was there. When the indoor bathroom went in, she was there. They worked hand in hand, arguing, pouting, pulling apart today what they had put up last week.

Robert Richardson

When the two owners of a two-family house have different tastes, this is the result. Decisions regarding color, siding, and windows can produce interesting exterior combinations.

Status in Lynch became closely associated with renovation. Early on, it was enough to dig up the front yard or the backyard and pour a concrete patio. These were simple improvements and are regarded today as crude. Later, more refined examples of patio-pouring featured color and intricate design. One of our neighbors chose pink, and his patio glowed like the Taj Mahal. Former residents drove in from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and everywhere else to see it. This neighbor felt quite good about himself and spoke only to a select few on the street.

Siding was also a major factor in the quest for status. The houses were painted every few years under company ownership

Jerry Richardson

The house where author Jerry Richardson grew up was home to two families at one time. Richardson's mother and brother still live here. The roof and chimney are the originals, but the rest of the house succumbed to renovation fever.

and looked nice. This, of course, would not do under private ownership. Siding salesmen were working overtime and were in and out of every house in Lynch. Men who would haggle for months over the price of a $200 used car bought thousands of dollars of pink or blue siding in 20 minutes.

The economy was booming in Lynch and in nearby communities, and money was changing hands. Building supply houses popped up, and once sleepy hardware stores became centers of activity. Contractors from Knoxville, Lexington, Cincinnati, and everywhere else joined the locals. Most were "honest men" who provided an "honest day's work" for 10 times what it was worth. A lot of people got burned initially in an effort to trump their neighbors, but fevers break, and people eventually settled down and became more prudent.

My oldest sister Ella and my oldest brother Ron were grown and out of the house by this time, but my brother Ray, my sisters Jean and Lois, and myself were in for the duration. Ray, the oldest at home, bore the brunt of the hard work. Each morning, Dad would yell up the stairs, and Ray would drag himself out and start renovating.

The family collaborated on many projects during the Era of Renovation. We tore down the outhouse and put in an indoor bathroom. We rewired the house. We took out the coal stove, blocked out the fireplace, and put in an oil furnace. We dug a basement, then used the dirt to fill in the drop-off in the front of the house, where you could literally step off the sidewalk and drop three feet before rolling down the hill to Main Street.

We solved the R-0 insulation problem by tearing out every wall in the house at least three times over and cramming them all with the pink stuff. Some of our neighbors eliminated the cold by having a foam insulation blown into their houses. A contracting firm out of somewhere would roll in with a big truck, drill some holes in the outer walls of the house, and blow in foam. This wasn't for Dad. No challenge.

Dad died in 1990, but Mom tells me that late at night, she sometimes hears the sound of hammers.

And so it went, nail by nail, year after year. The world changed, and our family changed. My sisters and I moved away. Ray went to Vietnam, came back, bought a house, and started renovating. Dad died in 1990, but Mom tells me that late at night, she sometimes hears the sound of hammers.

Last year, when my mother had some electrical work done, Kentucky Utility dispatched an inspector. According to Ray, the man surveyed the wiring in the attic, came downstairs, and went outside and lit a cigarette. He seemed shaken and stood there quietly for a long time. Finally, he looked at Ray.

"Who wired this house?" he asked.

"Dad did," Ray said proudly.

"When?" the man asked.

"About 1965," Ray said.

The man moved his eyes along the houses lining Church Street and nodded his head.

"Of course," he said. N&T

Robert Richardson

Jerry Richardson stands with his father, Vivian, in front of renovated Lynch, Ky., homes (1980).

Jerry Richardson is proud to be a coal miner's son. A graduate of the University of Kentucky and a former public school teacher, his short story, "Funeral," appeared in Now & Then's *winter 1996 issue on Appalachian Religion. His writings have also appeared in* Appalachian Heritage, Potpourri, The Crescent Review, *and others. Richardson now lives in Scott County, Ky. with his wife, Kelcey, their four horses, and two dogs, Onie and Sable. He is usually quite happy.*

The River Rock School

by Teresa Thomas Gereaux

Stone by stone,

rock by rock,

the town of Damascus, Va.,

builds a school for its children.

My mother always wanted to live in a rock house. I've long suspected that her love of such structures began with the Rock School in Damascus, Va., a school building set on the banks of the Laurel River, tucked away in the mountains of Southwest Virginia just a stone's throw from the Tennessee border.

Just before I was to begin first grade, my family returned to Damascus after having moved for a time to nearby Bristol, Tenn., where my paternal grandparents lived. The new house was not built completely out of rock like others in town, but all the same, it had a touch of Mom's dream. Sitting across from the Damascus train depot, just downstream from the schoolhouse, the tidy white house featured a front porch made of the smooth yet irregular brown and gray rocks taken from the Laurel River, the very same waters that had supplied the school's stones.

On my first day of school in 1970, Mom walked me to the big Rock School, then named Damascus Elementary, and told me how she, her brother, sisters, and even her mother and her mother's siblings had all attended the Rock School before me. Back in her youth, the school served all grades so it was the only school Mom ever attended. She went on to explain how the community helped to build the school. Even though it was only my first day, I immediately felt a part of something important. Over the years, I have learned more about this fascinating community project that today is still a vital part of this Appalachian town of nearly 1,000 residents.

Even though it was only my first day, I immediately felt a part of something important.

On the Banks of the Laurel River

Rivers have always been important to Damascus. The hamlet, at the crossing of the Laurel and Holston Rivers, has enjoyed prosperity and weathered tragedy on their banks. Historically, the rivers drew local industries such as the Damascus Lumber Company, the Union Tanning Co., and Beaver Chemical Co. to the town. Yet at the same time, heavy rains and runoff from the surrounding mountains can turn quiet trout streams into raging torrents and create a small lake right in the middle of the downtown. It is a town that knows flood warnings well.

Public schools began in Damascus in 1850 with a one-room subscription school near the present-day Wright's Chapel Methodist Church. The subscription was $1 per month. Several years later, area parents built yet another subscription school — a log schoolhouse called "Old Laurel" — just outside of town. Finally, in 1898, Washington County, Va., built the first free school to serve Damascus, a little red schoolhouse constructed at the end of Brook Street in 1898.

In 1920, an effort began to build a newer, larger school for the community. Clarence Backer came to Damascus from Melrose, Mass., to organize the Southport Extract Company, a company which cooked ground chestnut wood into tanning extract. Although Backer and his wife Lillian had no children of their own, they were devoted to the children and schools of Damascus. In

1914, he purchased a level piece of land he thought would be perfect for a school. It was on the banks of the Laurel River, just below the "Extract" section of town, so named because it was the site of Southport and other extract companies.

Backer was a major supporter of the community. He was instrumental in bringing the Beaver Chemical Co. to Damascus and in installing a water system in the Extract section of town. In addition, he published a newspaper and established the town's first library in a side room of the Presbyterian Church, with his niece serving as the first librarian.

Building a School

In 1920, when plans began for a new school, Backer donated land he had acquired some six years before for the school and served as chair of the ways and means committee charged with the task of raising funds for the new buildings. Private subscriptions raised $25,000, largely from the families of the school's prospective students, while the Washington County Board of Supervisors donated an additional $10,000 to the effort. The town of Damascus issued bonds for the remaining amount.

Although roughly $55,000 was now in place for the building, there was still the matter of assembling a labor force who would actually construct the school. Backer continued his strong support and saw that one of the Extract Company's engineers drew up plans for the building. It was decided to use river rocks for the exterior walls and for some interior spaces because they were abundant, convenient, and much cheaper than brick.

Louise Fortune Hall, author of the history of Damascus, recalls her fifth grade class attending school in a vacant office at the Extract plant while the new school was under construction. "Classes were held in many churches and vacant rooms," she remembers. "We were all over town."

Now it was time for other citizens to share in Backer's vision for the town school. Some, to be sure, had already donated money for construction. Now others helped with labor or materials. The Damascus Rock School quickly became a true example of Appalachian community spirit. Beginning in 1921, townsmen would arrive at the school job site late in the afternoon after having completed their day jobs on the railroad or at one of the many local lumber companies and sawmills or having worked on their farms since dawn. The women of the town organized bazaars to raise money for the project and provided great quantities of home-cooked food for the workers.

Since the site was so close to the Laurel River, the workers used their own wagons and several horses to drag thousands of pounds of rock to the construction site on sleds. Local stonemason George French supervised the rock masonry, which proved to be no easy task, what with all those irregularly sized rocks, but workers soon realized they could hasten their progress by making a complete run around the building. This allowed the cement to dry and be ready for the next level of rocks, allowing the volunteers to maximize their efforts and, they hoped, shorten their long workdays.

By 1923, the townspeople completed the Damascus Rock School. Historians estimate over 500 people worked on the building during its construction. After Christmas, students attended the school for the first time in January 1924.

With 15 spacious classrooms, a music room, library, and dining hall (cafeteria), it was one of the finest educational facilities in the area. The interior was trimmed with chestnut from nearby forests, and the auditorium featured rock walls inside as well as outside. The facade featured steps rising to the three arched doorways that opened into the auditorium. Those steps would soon become the backdrop for untold numbers of class pictures and graduation portraits.

Community interest in the Rock School did not end with the completion of its construction. The town's Au Courant Book Club sponsored the school library. The Civic League held bazaars to raise funds for drapes and shades. Lillian Backer donated land adjacent to the school for athletic fields, and the Lions Club built a grandstand and named the facility Backer

Courtesy of Ann A. Thomas

The Damascus Rock School circa 1950. The three doors in the front are the entrance to the auditorium. When it was an elementary school, first and second grades were in the center wing. The right wing was third and fourth grades, while the kindergarten was in the basement of the left wing. Fifth and sixth grades were on the main floor of the left wing, which also housed the principal's office.

By 1923, the townspeople completed the Damascus Rock School. Historians estimate over 500 people worked on the building during its construction.

Park. The Lions' addition of fencing and lighting for the field was a rarity at the time — making Backer Park a showplace for the school and for the town.

Yet another civic organization, the Community League — a later incarnation of the Civic League and a forerunner of the school's Parent Teacher Association — provided plantings for the exterior, and Backer lent his gardener to oversee the grounds. In 1932, the Civic League went so far as to host a teacher for the school, paying her salary and board. The teacher would spend one month with a Civic League member and then move to another member's home for the next month. The parents of high school students continued to pay subscriptions until the town bonds had been paid off in the 1940s.

A Community Center

Growing up, I had heard many stories about the town's involvement in the Rock School. Clearly, a first-rate educational facility for the town's children was the main priority, but the Rock School meant much more to the people of Damascus. Consistent with its strong community origins, the Rock School was a community center in the truest sense. The school boasted an auditorium where movies were shown in the days before the town had a theater. Proceeds from the movies were used to buy equipment for the school. Many citizens of Damascus saw their very first "sound movie" in the Rock School. It is a wonder to imagine my grandmother watching her first "talkie" in the same auditorium where I learned to dance the Virginia Reel.

The fact that movies were shown in the school auditorium was a surprise to me, but I was astonished to learn that the school's kitchen had once served as an operating room. During the 1930s, the Civic League organized a health crusade: They furnished milk for the schoolchildren, sponsored a sanitation drive, and helped to organize health clinics at the school. In one description of a "tonsil clinic" which served children in Damascus and the surrounding area, the school's cafeteria (otherwise known as the Banquet Hall) was furnished with cots while Dr. Baughman, the local physician, and his nurse performed operations in the kitchen. Women of the community stayed overnight during these clinics to help care for the schoolchildren who were being treated.

In 1951, the town added a new wing, also outfitted with river rock walls, to the Rock School. When a new high school was built in 1964 outside of town to serve the Holston district, grades seven through 12 moved to Holston High School, and the Rock School became Damascus Elementary.

In 1981, while a student at Holston High School, I was saddened to hear that Damascus Elementary would be closing its doors. Washington County built a fine new elementary school on Government Road just outside of town to offer the children the latest in technology and educational opportunities. I was happy for the students, two of whom were my younger sister and brother. But the new brick building had no character. It had no rocks. It was made of square, institutional, and boring bricks.

Bringing the Old Lady Back to Life

For some time, the Rock School sat vacant, a grand old lady facing the twilight of her years. Vandals broke windows, and the building fell into disrepair while town officials decided what to do with the once-prized school. Eventually, Damascus sold the school building to People, Inc., a community service agency. With funds from a federal community block grant, People, Inc. renovated the school. In 1990, it opened as Riverside Place — an affordable apartment community for senior citizens.

Courtesy of Ann A. Thomas

The rear view of the Rock School from Backer Park around 1930 shows the school without the additional wing, added in the 1950s. The wooden grandstand was later built up into a more solid structure, although it was not constructed out of rock.

Many felt the school building had been saved, but the federally funded restoration did not include the auditorium, with its rock walls and brass railing. Thankfully, People, Inc. did not convert the space into more apartments, but still, the auditorium was in dire need of attention.

Once again, a town leader came forward and led the way to another Rock School construction project. Elizabeth McKee, mayor of Damascus from 1992 to 1998, joined with others to see the auditorium restored to its original use as a community center. They formed the Rock School Renovation Committee and raised

It is a wonder to imagine my grandmother watching her first "talkie" in the same auditorium where I learned to dance the Virginia Reel.

$40,000 by selling T-shirts, plaques, and other memorabilia. U.S. Rep. Rick Boucher was able to find a matching grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the federal agency charged with fostering development in the region, and the work began.

The new brick building had no character. It had no rocks. It was made of square, institutional, and boring bricks.

The brass balcony railing had been stolen during the period of neglect but was soon replaced. Workers updated electrical and sound systems and added bathrooms. McKee says that while the auditorium still hasn't been restored to its original splendor, it is functional, and the ever-determined group is still working on improvements. Rep. Boucher, the son of Rock School alumnus Ralph Boucher, joined the citizens of Damascus in October 1998, to celebrate the resurgence of this landmark.

Today the auditorium hosts musical events and community ceremonies. McKee has already scheduled the auditorium for the town's upcoming celebration of Trail Days, a weekend of crafts, mountain music, dancing, and hiking begun in 1987 and designed to reinforce Damascus' reputation as the friendliest town on the Appalachian Trail (AT). This coming May, the festival is dedicated to a very special "thru-hiker," Earl Schaffer of the southern Pennsylvania village of York Springs, the first person ever to hike the entire AT from Georgia to Maine. On the 50th anniversary of his accomplishment, he decided to undertake the 2,160-mile trip once again — at the age of 79.

Memories

My memories of the Rock School are of field day and softball games at Backer Park, quiet mornings in the library, a merry-go-round that sagged with the weight of too many squealing children — and wonderful teachers who would comfort us when we suffered skinned knees and hurt feelings. It was — and still is — a community that shared in all our joys and sorrows.

The school auditorium holds a special place in my memories: We presented plays for our parents on PTA night. In that large, splendid room, our young minds were exposed to musicians, storytellers, and other performers for the first time. Films brought us the mysteries of science, faraway places, and amazing people. We attended choir and music classes there, and on rainy days, we played games and danced, learning how to square dance in the auditorium's aisles.

I conquered stage fright (for the most part) by spending many days on that stage during class plays, band practice and, on one especially memorable occasion, by giving a speech. Our teacher directed us to write a speech for a contest about an unsung American hero. I prepared my talk about my grandfather, whom I called Grand-Dale, an abbreviated version of Granddaddy Dale. One day after school, I walked over to Granny and Grand-Dale's house (back in the days when children could walk around unsupervised). I conducted my interview and took careful notes.

After several drafts, I was thrilled to learn that the judges had selected my speech as one of the winners. One of my proudest moments was when Grand-Dale came to school and received the recognition of a full house for being the subject of the award-winning speech.

Today, the Rock School of Damascus might be a little quieter without scores of schoolchildren filling the halls and running around the playgrounds. But once again, music echoes from the auditorium, and soon it will be filled to capacity for special town events. Outside, you can hear the crack of the bat in Backer Park, which still hosts baseball and softball games. The Rock School is back once again. N&T

Teresa Thomas Gereaux is among the third generation of her mother's family to have attended the Rock School. Today she lives a little further north on the Appalachian Trail in Catawba, Va., and is director of public relations at Roanoke College in Salem, Va.

Afterlife in the House of Spiders

The green metal pan
beside the wild daisies in the jar
the man thinks forms a still life
no one will ever paint.

He lifts two small potatoes
and an egg from the pan, warm yet,
and arranges them on a plate.
This is his lunch.

First he will eat the egg, sliced
evenly, with salt and pepper
and a curl of butter
centered on each half of yolk.

Then the potatoes without butter.
It is getting hot, he thinks,
but perhaps evening will be cooler.
Only the spiders keep him
company. At night they gather
by candles in the Regretting Room,
dangle from lampshades,
in corners of speckled mirrors,

and whisper stories of father, wife,
child, a name on a closed door,
neglected gardens,
habits the stars never forget

and how many centuries remain.

— Gaylord Brewer

Gaylord Brewer, who has roots in Eastern Kentucky and Southwest Virginia, is associate professor at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro where he edits Poems & Plays. *He has published over 350 poems, including a full-length collection,* Presently a Beast *(Coreopsis, 1996). He also writes articles and books on literary criticism. Brewer has had writing fellowships at the Fundacion Valparaiso (Spain), Hawthornden Castle (Scotland), and during the summer of 1998, the N.A.L.L. Art Association (France).*

BLACK IRON TONGUE

by Ralph S. Coleman

With hopes of a dream house recorded on wide-ruled paper, a couple searches for a place of their own.

A red tile roof, white stucco walls, mahogany doors opening to the master bedroom, an atrium with water spewing from rocks, a library large enough for 10,000 books, a sunken heart-shaped tub in front of the adobe fireplace in the den: All this and more was listed on wide-ruled notebook paper.

"That will be $814.32 a month for 396 months," said the loan officer, tapping a finger on the contractor's circled estimated building cost of our Spanish Southwestern house. She spoke as if I'd asked the price of a hamburger and fries.

I shook my head and then fixed my eyes on a stain in the green carpet. Becky, my fiancée, turned to me and said, "Maybe we can stop at Oakwood on our way back."

"No. We're not going to live in a trailer."

"Sir, they call them manufactured homes now," said the loan officer, who was still tapping her finger. "And some of them are quite nice."

"No," I replied. "Maybe we'll build a smaller house."

"With your present jobs, perhaps you should give serious thought to a mobile." Tapping her finger even harder, she added, "I'd be happy to handle the financing. Of course, the interest rate would be quite a bit higher than on a stick-built unit."

"No," I said and took my keys from my pocket.

> It looked like a
> tan Dachshund
> with a black iron tongue.

An Oakwood salesman was in our faces before we opened the car doors. We waded through his barrage of sales talk across the lot to the Special of the Week, a "2BR 14x63." It looked like a tan Dachshund with a black iron tongue.

The Leech unlocked the front door, and we stepped inside. "I love this lilac wallpaper," Becky said, looking around the living room. "Everything is so bright and clean-smelling."

"With 5 percent down, you're looking at payments of less than $200 a month," stated the Leech.

"$200 a month?" asked Becky, as we walked down the narrow hallway. "For how long?"

"Only 120 months. And did you notice the aluminum siding? Never has to be painted!"

"Does that tongue come off after they set the trailer up?" I asked.

"No, the hitch stays on your home. Some people lay boards across them and

Ralph Coleman

Foxy the dog lounges on what Ralph Coleman calls the "black iron tongue" of his trailer in Southwest Virginia.

set flower pots on them."

"We'll set a pot of purple mums on it," said Becky. "They'll match this wallpaper."

"But Becky, what about our Spanish house?"

"I'll paint the smaller bedroom white," she answered, rubbing her hands over a black eye on the range. "Or we'll put up that rough-textured wallpaper that we saw at the Dollar Store."

"But Becky ... "

"You can have the whole room just for your books. We can still build a house later."

"If we start out with a trailer, we'll never own a house."

"Not necessarily," she replied.

Along with the Leech, we looked

But sometimes, when our metal roof rumbles in the wind ... I miss the house we never built.

through several more models. Then we left with a downpayment receipt on the tan Dachshund.

Ralph Coleman

Ralph Coleman is content living in this two-bedroom trailer and has no plans to move — unless, of course, he can figure out how to build his dream house.

The years have ticked by like vacation weeks, and we're still in our 2BR 14x63. It's comfortable. I'm thankful for it, especially when I watch the evening news and see large Third World families living in bare-floor shanties. But sometimes, when our metal roof rumbles in the wind and when I pass by the two Spanish Southwestern houses in our part of the state, I miss the house we never built. N&T

Ralph S. Coleman still lives in a Wytheville, Va., mobile home but plans to build a Spanish Southwestern house after he becomes rich and famous. His essays have appeared in Appalachia, Grit, Snowy Egret, *and others.*

Bound for Halifax the Ex-Sharecropper Lets Fly

— for Clarence Wiles

On the Snatchburg road he points out
each shack or site where he once farmed—
him, parents, brothers and sisters

rising and falling with the fortunes of neighbors.
See that big house? I was born in a cabin
out behind. It's not there anymore—

it burned. The summer I turned twelve
my brother and I would climb the hill
to fire New Zion's boilers

every Sunday. Forty cents a month
the stewards paid. And that house above the creek—
we lived there too, walked three miles

each day—all of us—to ground we tended.
We never took the road. The woods
were quicker, if you knew the way,

back when Hoover promised water in every house
and a car in every garage. He delivered, too:
those that had cars had to park them—

no money for gas—*and when the water came*
it came through the roof. Technically,
this is untrue. On clear nights

he could count stars through the vaulted armature
but when it rained the wooden shingles
swelled tight. Only in winter,

sometimes, did he wake
when nature's hand touched him,
mantle of snow through boards clenched

against the cold place where it's still 1931—
People see these trailers now and call us trash.
They don't know how far we've come.

— G.C. Waldrep

G.C. Waldrep lives in Yanceyville, N.C., where he works as a window-maker. He has poetry in current issues of South Carolina Review, Ascent, Southern Poetry Review, *and other journals. His book,* Politics of Hope and Fear: The Struggle for Community in the Industrial South, *is forthcoming from University of Illinois Press.*

Miss Cleo's Revenge

by Lorna M. Kaine

The bridge crossed the river right where the mountain pinched off the road, and its concrete abutments bore many scars resulting from that inconvenient placement. Officially named the Georgetown Road Bridge, around town it was known as the bridge where the Kenny boys were killed.

Accidents weren't unusual on the bridge during the winter. A lot of cars slid into it, but the Kenny boys' car didn't just slide. The boys, on their way home after an evening of drinking beer at the Big Tree Roadhouse, slammed their '37 Ford into an abutment while going at least fifty miles an hour. They'd been celebrating joining the Army, something a lot of boys were doing in January 1942.

I was a skinny, pigtailed third grader that year and had never heard of the Kenny boys before their spectacular demise. Now, however, my grandmother couldn't stop talking about them. Their deaths provided her with new ammunition for her crusade against drinking.

When the neighborhood ladies came to spend an afternoon at the quilting frame, Grandma would start off with, "If those boys had been sober, they never would have hit that bridge."

Mrs. Kittle, whose daughter once had a crush on one of the Kennys, would rejoin with, "Well, they certainly had no upbringing. What decent people would let their boys go out and get drunk like that?"

> We might have lived in peace and harmony with Miss Cleo for a long time if Grandma hadn't taken to wondering how a maiden lady could afford a house and how she managed to get all the materials to renovate it.

Of course, nobody on our street actually knew the Kennys. John Kenny Sr. was the sole owner of the Kenny Foundry. It was a noisy, smelly, and dangerous place to work, but it provided a living for a lot of people and brought great profit to the Kenny family. John Kenny didn't have shareholders or a board of directors. The whole stinking conglomeration of furnaces, smokestacks, and bricks belonged to him. The consensus around town was that John Kenny could do just about anything he pleased, especially now that our country was at war. As for Mrs. Kenny, all we knew for sure was that she existed. A few of the neighbor ladies had seen her around town in John Kenny's car. She was rumored to be a redhead of ethereal beauty.

In the spring of '42, bigger and better rumors began to circulate about Mrs. Kenny. She had been seen walking in the center of town, drunk. John Kenny made quite a spectacle of himself, luring her back into his car. The next thing we heard was that Mrs. Kenny had been sent to an out-of-state hospital. The neighbor

ladies nodded sagely and said for sure, she hadn't been sent to the hospital because she was sick. Even my grandma, who was by now caught up in a flurry of knitting for the Red Cross and had three sons in the Army, found time to comment. "No wonder the Kenny boys drank. Look what they had for a mother."

My street was typical of small-town Appalachia in the 1940s. Factory buildings, often empty, leaned into each other on one side of the street. Houses of various lineages, from the turreted aristocrat on the corner to a couple of converted coal houses, lined up on the other side. The house I called home bulged with an extended family consisting of my grandparents, three aunts, my mother, my sister, and me. The Kittle family had rented the house next door for as long as I could remember. In April 1942, they bought a house down the street. We speculated about who would move in while we all waited impatiently to meet our new neighbor.

Nobody moved in right away. We were amazed when, despite wartime restrictions on building material, carpenters appeared to add a new front porch to the house. Then came an attached garage. Nobody on our street had an attached garage. Hardly anybody had a car. Next, an honest-to-goodness pond appeared in the backyard, with water lilies and a weeping willow by its side.

> The consensus around town was that John Kenny could do just about anything he pleased, especially now that our country was at war.

Our new neighbor finally drove up in a light blue 1939 Nash Coupe. No stranger to the adults on the street, Miss Cleo Cooper, who stepped out of the car that day, was the English IV teacher at the local high school.

Grandma would have baked an apple pie for Miss Cleo if there hadn't been a war on. Since there was, she contented herself with presenting our new neighbor a bunch of daffodils. While trying to get acquainted without being too nosy, Grandma asked, "What church do you go to?"

"Presbyterian," answered Miss Cleo.

That put Grandma in her place. We were Methodists — Northern Methodists, not the Southern variety. However, on the local rating system, Presbyterians ranked just a tad higher than Methodists of either persuasion. Grandma was as pleased as a cat with a cream pitcher. Miss Cleo was real quality.

Miss Cleo wove her way into the fabric of our street during the ensuing months. She consulted with my grandpa about her lawn. When he told her the lily pond was a silly idea, sure to draw mosquitos, she agreed with him, and the two of them drained it. With Grandpa's help, she put in a victory garden where the pond had been.

Once school was out, Miss Cleo entertained her bridge club during the day. With the windows open in both houses, it wasn't difficult to see and hear what went on next door. Grandma thought bridge was some sort of highbrow game till she found out it used playing cards.

Thereafter she spoke in whispers behind her hand to other adults

Tom Clifton

about Miss Cleo's bridge afternoons.

Miss Cleo brought all sorts of novel entertainment to the street. She played the piano quite well, and we came to enjoy her classical music selections. However, when we saw strangers entering her house carrying musical instruments, we knew we were in for an evening of chamber music. Grandma wasn't sure, but she thought the music was evil because she never recognized any hymn tunes. She complained loudly to Mrs. Sherman, who lived on the other side of Miss Cleo, that the heathen music kept us all awake till the wee hours of the night. Miss Cleo took the hint and confined herself to piano playing.

We might have lived in peace and harmony with Miss Cleo for a long time if Grandma hadn't taken to wondering how a maiden lady could afford a house and how she managed to get all the materials to renovate it. Grandma began sitting on the front porch in the evening, the better to spy on the comings and goings next door. Finally, she was rewarded.

We all heard about it over breakfast the next morning. "I couldn't believe my eyes," Grandma began. "There he was, big as brass, letting himself into the house without knocking."

"Who?" I played the straight man as Grandpa passed the grits.

"None other than John Kenny. He walked right into her house, just like he owned it."

"Probably does," interjected Grandpa from behind his newspaper.

"The least he could do is come in the backdoor so nobody'd see him."

"What difference would it make? You'd see him through the window."

Grandma's eyes narrowed, and her lips assumed a self-righteous straightness. "That's another thing. She pulled the blinds as soon as he came in.

"All I know," Grandma went on, "is that ever since she moved in over there, she's kept the blinds up, no matter who visited. Why'd she pull them when John Kenny came around?"

"If you want me to, I'll ask her. Maybe her blind rollers were broke. You can't buy new ones these days." Grandpa knew that would shut her up.

Grandma sighed noisily and said, "Well, I never . . . ," then started to clear the table, mumbling to herself.

For the next several evenings, quite a crowd gathered on our front porch. Somehow, we all managed to face Miss Cleo's door.

For the next several evenings, quite a crowd gathered on our front porch. All three unmarried aunts, my mother, my sister, and I, plus a few neighbor ladies, gathered in the early twilight. Somehow, we all managed to face Miss Cleo's door. Grandpa retired to the back stoop in disgust.

Our vigilance was rewarded when we saw John Kenny on the porch next door. Although he must have walked around the block to avoid passing all the eyes on our porch, he ignored us once he reached Miss Cleo's. He stepped right inside, just like Grandma had reported.

I was disappointed. John Kenny was nothing but a balding red-haired man dressed in a light blue suit. The next thing I knew, my sister and I had been shooed off to bed. Snippets of conversation from the porch tantalized us as we tried to sleep in the only bedroom in the house that had no windows facing Miss Cleo's.

Miss Cleo was not a pretty woman. However, she smiled a lot now, which made us ignore her intense dark eyes hiding behind glasses and a nose reminiscent of an Indian chief.

"What I'd like to know is why he's still walking around town when every other able-bodied man is in the Army."

"It's the foundry — it's a war industry."

"So what? Somebody else can run it. He ought to be strung up."

"And to think that Cleo yelled at our tomcat. She's no better than he is."

I drifted off to sleep, wondering what all the commotion was about.

Grandma never had another kind word to say about Miss Cleo. She started pulling down our blinds if she thought John Kenny was next door. Miss Cleo ignored us all and lived her life much as before. She was not a pretty woman, being tall and ungainly with a sharp-featured face. However, she smiled a lot now, which made us ignore her intense dark eyes hiding behind glasses and a nose reminiscent of an Indian chief. When school started in September, several students were heard speculating about Miss Cleo's love life. The consensus was that she'd fallen in love — she was too nice.

After a while, the novelty wore off, and we stopped paying so much attention to Miss Cleo's house. John Kenny came and went, along with the bridge club. For a change, everybody — including Grandma — minded his or her own business.

Another September came. I started the fifth grade, and my sister went off to junior high. She seemed very grown up to me now that she had a real boyfriend who took her to Saturday movies and football games. This meant I was left on my own a lot. I used my leisure to stare into Miss Cleo's house and to wonder why we had all thought she was so exciting in the beginning.

The truth was nobody had time for gossip anymore. The neighborhood ladies still gathered at our house to quilt, but many of them, including my mother, now had jobs at the shirt factory. Most often instead of talking to each other, they would use their time together to listen to the radio for war news. On a bleak November day, however, there was one piece of local news nobody could ignore. John Kenny had died of a heart attack.

There were a few glimpses of Miss Cleo swathed in black during the next few days. Then she pretty much dis-

appeared. We heard sad music from the piano, but that was about it. Grandpa remained friendly with her and helped her when he could. He'd shovel her walk when it snowed or help her thaw her water pipes when the temperature dipped below zero. When the seed catalogs came out in January, they talked about what she should plant in her garden when spring came.

Miss Cleo surprised us all when spring finally arrived. She bought herself a mansion right across the street from the Presbyterian Church. Grandpa read about it in the legal notices in the newspaper. We didn't really believe she'd go till we saw the moving van next door. She didn't say

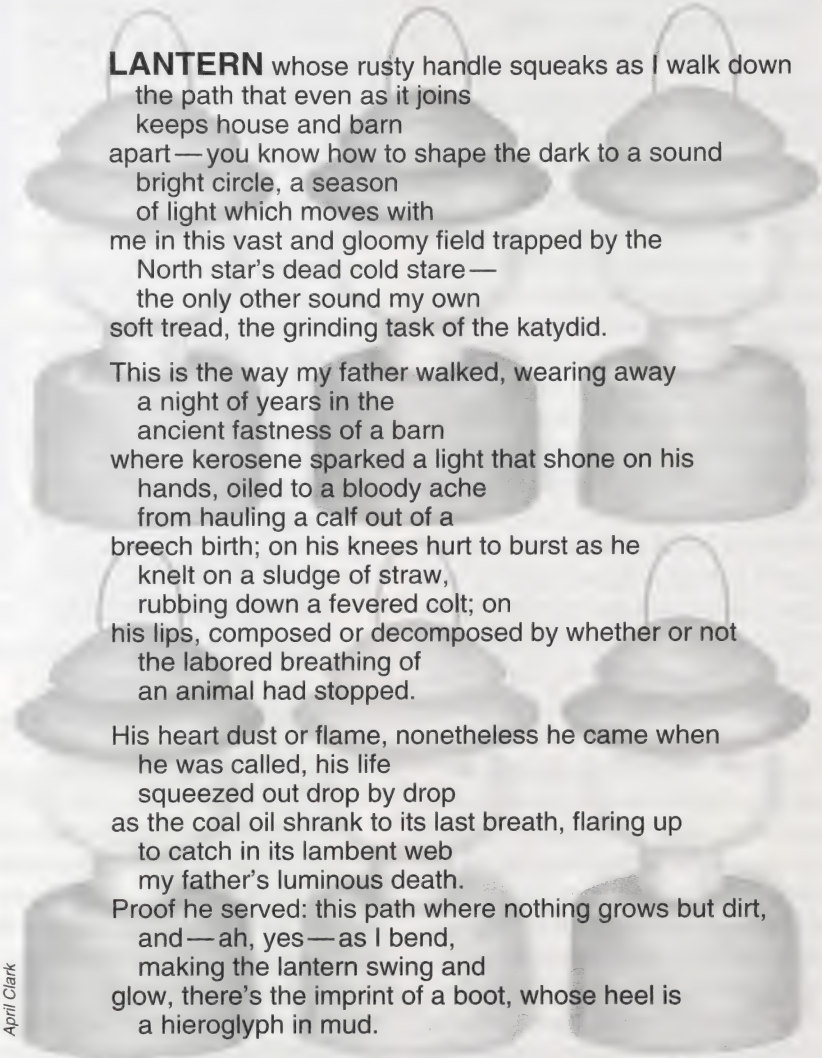
> On a bleak November day, however, there was one piece of local news nobody could ignore.

goodbye to us. She just disappeared one spring day.

Miss Cleo still taught English IV when I was a senior in high school. The story we heard was that she really didn't need to work for money any longer. She kept teaching because she enjoyed it. I found her to be a good but stern teacher.

She was definitely an old maid now. Nobody in my class ever wondered if she had a boyfriend. With the cruel certainty of youth, we knew she didn't. After she bought the big house, she never again flaunted her money. She still drove a blue Nash, a later model of course, and the clothes she wore to school looked to be at least twenty years old. I never thought much about her time on our street except once in a while, when the red smoke from the Kenny Foundry smeared the night sky — or when I'd pass the bridge where the Kenny boys were killed. N&T

Now a resident of Oviedo, Fla., Lorna M. Kaine grew up in West Virginia. Her essays and fiction have been published in Somniloquy, Dogwood Tales, *and* The Orlando Sentinel. *She has supported her writing habit with various day jobs, ranging from working as a general factotum in a consulting engineering firm to teaching middle school science.*



April Clark

LANTERN whose rusty handle squeaks as I walk down
the path that even as it joins
keeps house and barn
apart — you know how to shape the dark to a sound
bright circle, a season
of light which moves with
me in this vast and gloomy field trapped by the
North star's dead cold stare —
the only other sound my own
soft tread, the grinding task of the katydid.

This is the way my father walked, wearing away
a night of years in the
ancient fastness of a barn
where kerosene sparked a light that shone on his
hands, oiled to a bloody ache
from hauling a calf out of a
breech birth; on his knees hurt to burst as he
knelt on a sludge of straw,
rubbing down a fevered colt; on
his lips, composed or decomposed by whether or not
the labored breathing of
an animal had stopped.

His heart dust or flame, nonetheless he came when
he was called, his life
squeezed out drop by drop
as the coal oil shrank to its last breath, flaring up
to catch in its lambent web
my father's luminous death.
Proof he served: this path where nothing grows but dirt,
and — ah, yes — as I bend,
making the lantern swing and
glow, there's the imprint of a boot, whose heel is
a hieroglyph in mud.

— Llewellyn McKernan

Llewellyn McKernan received a 1998 Literary Fellowship in Fiction funded by the West Virginia Commission on the Arts. Her poems have been published in Appalachian Journal, Appalachian Heritage, Southern Poetry Review, The Kenyon Review, Antietam Review, Kestrel, *and others. Her two poetry books are* Short and Simple Annals *and* Many Waters.

Reviews

Trailer Trash From Tennessee: Technicolor Memories of a Boy's Life

by David Hunter

Rutledge Hill Press
Nashville, Tenn. - 1995
$9.95 (paper)

In this collection of 33 sketches from David Hunter's childhood, he entertains readers with his humorous recollections of growing up in East Tennessee and the Carolinas. For Hunter, home is truly wherever we are happiest — whether it is in Knoxville, Tenn., in a run-down white clapboard house or in a little farmhouse built of scrap materials on Rifle Range Road; a trailer park in Aiken, S.C.; or a small cabin in the hills of Tennessee's Claiborne County. No matter where he has lived, he is proud of where he has come from and who he is.

Hunter has 10 other fiction and nonfiction books to his name, but this 1995 volume was the first that was primarily autobiographical and unrelated to his career as a law enforcement officer (Hunter is now semiretired after nearly 15 years on Knoxville's police force). Full of the kinds of stories we all hear at family gatherings, *Trailer Trash* is relatively light reading, quickly and easily digested.

Still, despite his accessible style and predominantly descriptive storytelling technique, Hunter deals with serious issues ranging from religion — for example, the essay "Time in the Fiery Furnace" — to change and technology, as in "Grandmother Goin and the Obscene Machine." Other stories take on equally challenging topics, from alcoholism ("Work Was Made for Fools and Mules") to sex ("And I Feared a Shotgun Wedding"). Again and again, he explores his own coming of age and the lessons life has taught him in pieces such as "The Summer of My Clumsiness" and "Childhood's End."

Hunter's stories successfully capture the spirit of his childhood. Whether he is sharing an anecdote about the time Thomas the cat stole (and then returned) the bright blue Easter chick; recounting his adventures as Black Bear, the fearless Indian of Rifle Range Road; or recollecting how his father actually built a house entirely from scraps with borrowed tools, David Hunter skillfully shows how his surroundings enriched his childhood.

Because of the positive — and nostalgic — nature of the anecdotes in this book, I would venture to say that Hunter probably would not have traded places with someone who lived in more luxurious quarters. He has done an excellent job of capturing the essence of childhood in all its raw enthusiasm, wonder, and discovery. A talented storyteller, he leaves the reader hungry for more.

— Laurie Blake

Laurie Blake is a fourth year premed student at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., where she is majoring in biology and English. A native Tennessean, she has a longtime interest in local writers and storytelling.

In the Hands of a Happy God: The "No-Hellers" of Central Appalachia

by Howard Dorgan

University of Tennessee Press
Knoxville, Tenn. - 1997
$34.00 (hardcover) $17.00 (paper)

Of all the denominations with a reputation for hellfire and brimstone, surely Baptists in the American South take the prize. Even sophisticated Baptists of towns, villages, and hamlets believe that the wicked and doctrinally impure will burn in the lake that never ends.

This harsh doctrine is stressed even more in congregations whose ministers do not have formal theological training. For example, the Calvinist Primitive Baptists, who formed their movement in opposition to the evangelism of mission societies in the 1800s, stress that humans are predestined either to salvation or eternal condemnation and punishment. Such a belief, of course, made missionary efforts moot.

That groups hold this particular belief is no surprise. What does come as a surprise, I suspect, is that a group of Primitive Baptists in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia reject the concept of eternal punishment. These Baptists are not descendants of Boston Unitarians nor are they theological liberals whose confession has been shaped by mainstream theological education. Instead, the Primitive Baptist Universalists (PBU) are an indigenous religious group in Appalachia who share most all of the folk and theological characteristics of many other Appalachian Baptist groups, with the important exception of their Universalism. Universalism, a belief that has been a part of Christian theology since the first century, holds that all human beings will ultimately be redeemed.

Howard Dorgan of Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., has established himself as the primary scholar of Central Appalachian Baptist subdenominations known as Old-Time Baptists. These Baptists — with names like Regular Baptists, Old Regular Baptists, United Baptists, and Primitive Baptists — are small groups that are not part of the larger mainline Nashville, Tenn.-based Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). With a history that in many cases predates the SBC, these subdenominations grew outside the mainstream, almost never intersecting with their more numerous Baptist relatives. All of these groups share common practices, such as a cappella singing, footwashing, and highly emotive extemporaneous preaching. Moreover, these groups, with their use of the King James Version, have a "biblicist" religion: Every doctrine finds its basis in scripture. Their interpretation of the Bible is, in a broad sense, fundamentalist.

It is among these people that Dorgan found a group of Primitive Baptists who, despite sharing all these characteristics, have arrived at a belief in Universalism. Having gained followers in America since the 1770s, Universalism was especially strong in New England and in some parts of the South, with Baptists supplying many converts.

The emphasis is on the word *conversion.* In most cases, Universalists were apt to form their own churches rather than carry their newfound belief back to their old denominational home. Universalism survived as an important part of American religious history and thrives today as part of the Unitarian-Universalist denomination, created as a result of the

Mike Rominger, Appalachian State University Public Affairs

Howard Dorgan walks away from Stoney Creek Church, a Primitive Baptist Universalist meeting house near Highway 91 in Carter County, Tenn.

merger of the Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association in 1961.

Such was not the case with the PBU. This group grew out of the split in the ranks of Primitive Baptists, beginning in 1924. Although Universalist doctrine had been in their midst much earlier, it was only in this year that the Washington District Association of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia split into the "Heller" and "No-Heller" factions. For the "No-Hellers," a term Primitive Baptists themselves discourage because they consider it overly simplistic and pejorative, hell is not so much something they reject as a concept they do not take literally. Nor do they see it as a possible future destination. Hell, for Primitive Baptists, refers to the temporal condition of humans who live in ways that do not reflect strong ethical and moral values.

Most people, according to the PBUs, are miserable when they live immoral lives, and this misery is hell. The call to embrace Christianity, then, is not a call to salvation. Instead, people recognize that they are already saved and live accordingly. According to Dorgan, PBUs — with their de-emphasis of the wrath of God — have a positive worldview that comes out in sermon content and in social relations.

Dorgan, a professor of communication, utilizes a variety of methods in this book, including ethnology, historical examination of texts, and theology. He visited numerous PBU congregations and associational meetings for this study, and out of that fieldwork, he gives a clear picture of this group's present status. He also weaves the stories of individual PBU devotees into his narrative. In addition to ethnographic material, Dorgan traces the history of the PBU and makes a compelling argument for the source of the group's universalism in the mainstream American Universalist movement.

One question could be more explicitly answered: Why did PBUs, upon adopting Universalist thought, continue to think of themselves as Primitive Baptists instead of forming a new Universalist church as so many former Baptist congregations had done in New England? How did they retain their denominational identity upon adopting such a divergent doctrine? This question is surely an important one to answer.

Such lingering questions, however, do not take away from the value of the book. Dorgan's research is some of the most important in Baptist denominational history. He is one of the early nonsectarian scholars of Baptist life, and his work provides models for studying other religious subgroups in Appalachia.

— Merrill Hawkins Jr.

Merrill Hawkins Jr. is assistant professor of religion at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and author of Will Campbell: Radical Prophet of the South. *In January 1999, he became editor of* Baptist History and Heritage.

The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays

edited by Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson

University of Tennessee Press
Knoxville, Tenn. - 1997
$40.00 (hardcover)

Thank goodness for *The Civil War in Appalachia,* a volume of essays that brings fresh and challenging insights to a venerable topic. The collection seeks "to provide a useful introduction to the social history of Appalachia's Civil War . . .; to sum up where we have been and suggest where we need to go; and to point out the need to integrate Appalachian scholarship with studies of the Civil War and vice versa." The essays achieve these ambitious goals.

Several general themes unify the 11 essays in this collection, most of which have been penned by historians: individual motivations for supporting the Union or Confederacy; the wartime experience; and the conditions that emerged following the war. After the editors' perceptive introduction, the first four essays illustrate the myriad factors that influenced a person's allegiance to one side or the other.

Peter Wallenstein and W. Todd Groce both examine the social origins of East Tennessee's soldiers, looking at Union troops and Confederate leaders, respectively. While Wallenstein might have analyzed his sources more thoroughly, such as acknowledging the limitations inherent in using the answers to questionnaires collected from a relatively small number of Tennessee veterans more than 50 years after the Civil War's close, the two scholars convincingly demonstrate that socioeconomic class played an important but not a deterministic role in shaping loyalties.

Both Martin Crawford and Ralph Mann see local conditions as having had the most important effect in Ashe County, N.C., and in the Sandy Basin of Southwestern Virginia. These balanced and well-nuanced essays explain how, in Crawford's words, the "fragile, often conflictual, but undeniably persistent character" of neighborhood and kinship dynamics shaped both Unionist and Con-

federate sentiment. For the important role played by ideas such as patriotism and freedom, however, readers should consult historian James M. McPherson's 1997 work, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War.*

The next four essays take different approaches toward understanding the wartime experience in Appalachia. Kenneth W. Noe sensitively analyzes how guerrilla warfare evolved in West Virginia; he particularly focuses on the emotional and psychological elements of the experience. Jonathan D. Sarris shows how the bitter fighting in North Georgia centered on local issues — or on larger matters as they were understood in that local context. John C. Inscoe studies the accounts of 25 Unionist fugitives who had escaped from Confederate prisons and traveled through Appalachia. Inscoe convincingly argues that these fugitives closely observed the region's inhabitants, but he still must make the case that these observations informed the fugitives' writings, which were published between 1863 and 1915.

English professor Jan Furman describes John McCline's experiences as a 10-year-old slave who escaped in late 1862 and traveled with Union troops. However, she accepts McCline's account too uncritically. For example, she doesn't account for distortions that come with a memoir written more than 60 years after the events in question. She also makes no connection to the larger issues of Appalachian and Civil War history.

Robert Tracy McKenzie and Gordon B. McKinney address the war's economic and social effects on Upper East Tennessee and Western North Carolina, respectively. McKenzie, combining qualitative evidence with quantitative data drawn from agricultural and population censuses, clearly and convincingly explains the variety of forces that so disrupted East Tennessee. McKinney uses the Confederacy's efforts to develop an armory at Asheville, N.C., to help readers understand "the limited options available to the Confederacy, and … the obstacles in the way of anyone who sought to bring industry to the mountain south."

This sensitivity to the larger contexts also infuses the final essay, archivist Shannon H. Wilson's complex and engaging analysis of how the "myth of Unionist Appalachia" shaped the ways in which Berea College and Lincoln Memorial University depicted mountaineers during the half-century following the Civil War.

This collection helps us understand the astounding variety of experiences that took place in the mountain region during the Civil War era. Notwithstanding an occasional exaggeration or factual error, these scholars write in admirably clear and vigorous prose from start to finish. *The Civil War in Appalachia* will capture the attention and enlarge the understanding of anyone interested in this critical period of American history.

— David C. Hsiung

David C. Hsiung teaches at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., and has written the 1997 book, Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains: Exploring the Origins of Appalachian Stereotypes.

Eureka Mill
by Ron Rash
The Bench Press
Corvallis, Ore. - 1998
$12.95 (paper)

In the poignant poem "July, 1949," Ron Rash describes his mother's departure from a farm in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. At the outset, she is a young woman, sweltering as she hoes in the fields. With aching muscles, callused hands, and a half-filled suitcase, she drops the hoe, walks toward her southbound cousins' car, toward millwork in South Carolina, toward her future husband, and — as Rash says — "Toward me."

The late Appalachian scholar Cratis Williams once said, "It takes at least three generations to get the mountains out of a family." Rash's story is the story of many second and third generation Appalachians who were born in the Piedmont mill towns of the Carolinas but who still sense that their spiritual home is in the mountain coves and valleys their parents couldn't stop loving. The mountains are clearly still in Rash as he tells his own story and that of countless other families of the industrial outmigration. It is this combination of the universal and the intimate that gives his collection of poems, *Eureka Mill*, its power.

The poems speak of journeys: the poet's journey into his own Appalachian past; his paternal grandfather's trek to the mill village; his mother's later passage from the mountains to that same mill village; his grandfather's homeward journey after death; and Rash's own journey toward meaning and affirmation.

The epigraph from historian Frank Tannenbaum's *Darker Phases of the South* speaks of the deadening effect of the mill village: "It buries its inhabitants and hides them from the world." Rash's book resurrects those who gave birth to him and to his art: "I eat well and I rest on the gift of their labors." In "Invocation," a poem addressed to his dead grandfather, he asks for the power "to weave with words a thread/ of truth as I write down/ your life and other lives."

The poems in the first of six sections set the universal significance of his family's story — the old story of industrialization, crop failure, the shift from an independent agrarian existence to raising cash crops. In later sections, Rash chronicles his grandfather's transition from farmer to millworker, from a young man who becomes lost in the rows of identical mill houses to a dying man whose friends will not give him up to the killing cancer until one more fish story is shared, one more cigarette is smoked. The poet writes in "September, 1957":

> In the dogwood tree's shallow shade
> they opened the fish-gorged trunk,
> worried a rainbow of flies
> as they weighed and measured, recaught
> each fish, argued minnows versus plugs,
> sinker weights and line strength.

Rash gives voice not only to his grandfather but also to wives, children, teenagers, and owners, all warped by mill life. They are suffocated by lint, a recurring image in the poems. However, in "Spring Fever," the women, viewing life through the camera-eye of reality, comment on the blurred focus of their men who long for the old farm life: "It's easy to love a life/ you only have to live the good parts of."

Collectively, the poems tell the story of Everyman caught in the cycle of hope, entrapment, resignation, and resiliency. In "September, 1957," the poet tries to read the impact of life in his grandfather's face

in an old photograph. In that dying face, does he see "a grimace of pain or a grin"? But in "Last Words," the kinship of the two is clear as his grandfather's spirit urges him to get some sleep: "I know too well the sun hits like a hammer/ when it rises up after a moonshine night."

Rash's greatest challenge is to give authentic voice to his characters without patronizing them. Only occasionally do we see reference to dialectal pronunciation or words. In his empathy with the people he portrays, Rash humanizes those whose lives have been presented in textbook studies by social historians such as Liston Pope's *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World.* Through poetry, he provides a voice in the spirit of Harriette Arnow's great novel of displacement, *The Dollmaker.* Appalachians and other Southerners, indeed all who share a strong sense of place, recognize the truth in the grandfather's words from his Blue Ridge Mountain grave in the poem "Last Words": "And when the resurrection comes I find/ God has found me worth a better place/ I'll rise again and not have far to go,/ for Heaven's surely close to home."

—Joyce Compton Brown

Joyce Compton Brown is a professor of English at Gardner-Webb University. She is currently pursuing interests in culturally and economically diverse communities in Western North Carolina and has an article on the Tally War labor unrest in The Journal of Appalachian Studies. *She has published poetry in* Appalachian Heritage.

Air
by Mark DeFoe
Green Tower Press
Maryville, Mo. - 1998
$6.50 (paperback)

The poetry in Mark DeFoe's new chapbook, *Air,* is as pleasant a surprise as its bright, fake-naive cover. Not that good poems from DeFoe are a surprise. People who have read him before have come to expect good poems. The surprise is the effervescent nature of this book — from the jazzy yellow and orange cut-paper flowers to the closing sonnet about his wife's humming a song by Schumann.

With humor and sensitivity, his appreciation of life makes the ordinary extraordinary, giving over to the reader everyday pleasures as well as reminders of the precariousness of good fortune. While the title, *Air,* refers to song, it also suggests how fleeting our lives are: Trying to catch hold of life, these poems seem to imply, is like trying to grab a fistful of air.

The book opens with the poem "Air," an admonishment to listen to the music of the souls of the dead. Careful, attentive listening summarizes the author's method, which is to observe, to stay alive to the community of fellow creatures and their struggles. Even the dead — who once strove for happiness, for goodness, for a living — are with us, the narrator says. We can hear them: "We turn to our work, cocking heads to what/ pings among the dust motes."

Presenting the family as the most basic of communities and as an essential part of the narrator's life, these poems center on home. They're set in the garden, on the lawn and the porch, and inside the house. One poem is about leaving home, two about coming home. And "home" in this narrative is part of the architecture of Middle America. A Little League baseball diamond, McDonald's, a mall, and Hilton Head — with its marinas and golf courses — are among the few away-from-home settings.

The narration refers directly to Appalachia in an epigraph to a poem about an ex-miner and indirectly in the poem "Leaving the Hills," with its image of a young woman who is "flying the hollow" in a red Camaro. These two poems are more the exception than the rule, however. DeFoe's perspective in most of the poems emphasizes how much Appalachian lives have in common with other lives in the 20th century United States.

If the narrative of these poems values community, it also tells us to pay attention to human weakness as a threat to that community. The second poem, "13 Ways of Eradicating Blackbirds," a loose parody of Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," is hilarious. It starts off with the deception of the blackbirds — "Reason with them. Speak softly. Hide your stick." — and ends with their massacre: "Pound them to soup! Win! Win! Win! Die! Die! Die!" DeFoe brings our human impulse to destroy right up front and criticizes it through a ludicrously virulent attack against an innocent target. This poem's complex wittiness is such that, at the same time it clearly ridicules the primal fear and anger underlying such ferocity, it also seems indulgent of human frailty.

"I Was Flying and You Were Driving," a love poem, imitates the painfully slow movement of time when you're awaiting a reunion with someone you love. Repeated lines circle back on themselves the way a plane circles overhead in preparation for landing. The incremental retardation and advance inherent in this poem's form make the long wait for the plane to land almost palpable.

In "November: Strolling the Beach at Hilton Head," the luxury of vacationing at Hilton Head is made poignant by the narrator's awareness of workmen whose shapes "ghost through the landscaping." The narrator points out, as many wouldn't, that the shrimper chugging into the harbor only operates for the pleasure of those who can afford the shrimp. My only complaint about this mood piece is that the poem is almost too lovely. The poem's soft atmosphere is not disrupted by the narrator's apparent awareness that the laborers don't share the privileges of those who benefit from their work. Like Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," this melancholic poem almost makes social inequity seem natural, a part of how things are and always will be.

My quibble with DeFoe's presentation of his material in this poem relates to a misgiving I have about a couple of other poems. Although the book gives a generous, sympathetic account of human struggle, authors always incur a risk of sounding patronizing when they sympathize with groups of which they aren't members. To me, several poems succumb to this danger: in particular, a poem about a divorcee and one about teenagers.

"Aging Divorcee at Solitaire" seems forced and simplistic. The solitary divorcee, wearing a solitaire ring, taps her cherry-red fingernails and plays solitaire to while away her dreary, husbandless existence. The narration seems to be an attempt at sympathy, but the artistic imagination

behind the poem seems inadequate to the task of lifting the story beyond stereotypes.

"Mall Monsters — Male" also oversimplifies. Teenaged boys and young men of recent decades have not adopted punk costume, tattoos, and shaven heads merely out of immaturity, as this poem seems to imply. Although it must be a relief to many adults to find that threatening-looking youth are not often as threatening as they look, to dismiss them as merely fearful about growing up does not do justice to the youth or to the forces influencing them.

But if these are flaws in the book, they are flaws born of a humane impulse. DeFoe's desire for community bids him to try on other people's lives and struggles. His collection opens by asking the reader to listen to the music of the dead and closes with his wife singing to the music of a long-dead composer. In "Once on the Porch/ You Hummed Schumann," the narrator listens lovingly to both the living and the dead as he listens to her song, her voice "thin, wavering toward crystal notes," full of hopeful striving.

— Edwina Pendarvis

Edwina Pendarvis teaches at Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. Her work has appeared in Antietam Review, Appalachian Journal, Bone & flesh, Now & Then, Phoebe, Small Pond, *and other journals.* Joy Ride *is published in the three-volume compilation entitled* Human Landscapes, *published by Bottom Dog Press.*

Bloodroot: Reflections on Place by Appalachian Women Writers

Edited by Joyce Dyer

University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Ky. - 1998
$28.00 (hardcover)

Hats off to Joyce Dyer for such a grand idea for a book: The premise is simple, but the process clearly required much communication and coordination to produce the volume she has given us.

Dyer has solicited autobiographical essays from 35 Appalachian women writers and asked them to speak about the influence of place on their lives and on their writings. The result is a gripping collection of commentaries on the power of geography, topography, and community/ family culture in human lives.

Dyer's authors range from the very well-known — such as novelists Lee Smith, Wilma Dykeman, and Denise Giardina — to lesser known newcomers, such as poets Rita Sims Quillen and doris diosa davenport and writer/physician Artie Ann Bates. They represent seven Appalachian states, all in Southern and Central Appalachia, though many of the writers have ties to multiple states both inside and outside the region.

Indeed, one of the striking, recurrent themes in the book is the implied comparison of cultures inside Appalachia to experiences the authors have had either living outside the region or in some part of Appalachia other than the place they consider home. They represent white, African American, and Native American women. They come from the ranks of full-time writers, business professionals, college professors, public school teachers, librarians, physicians, nurses, performing artists, homemakers, retirees, and more. Their ages range from the early 40s to the mid-80s. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, granddaughters, wives, and friends.

What these disparate writers have in common is a passion for writing and a need to tell their stories about their people, their places, their influences. Cherokee-Appalachian poet Marilou Awiakta of Tennessee relates how "sound has shaped me." She hears generations of grandmothers whispering in her ear, "Don't be puny, Honey. Get the job done." She hears her mother singing her birth story every year without fail — affirming the worth of *this* child, this *one.* She hears the hum of ideas, energy, and labor that became the city of Oak Ridge, Tenn., center of the atomic frontier, built atop land that once nurtured her Cherokee and Scots-Irish ancestors. She credits the songs, the stories, the sounds with bringing her home to continue the tradition in her own writing.

Novelist and poet George Ella Lyon of Kentucky also recounts the importance of the "voice of home." She says, "My metaphor for writing is listening ... I couldn't do it if I didn't have a choir, a cacophony, a family reunion of voices in my head. Totally fictional voices speak out, too. Part of my work is extending the invitation."

Novelist Mary Lee Settle of West Virginia hears voices too. In her search for the time frame for her novel *O Beulah Land,* set in 1754, she describes how not only the sounds and voices but also the sights, the emotions of those early emigrants to the West Virginia frontier flooded her senses: "I had to become contemporary, think as they thought, fear what they had feared, use their own language with its yet unchanged meanings, face a blank and fearful future. I had to forget what I already knew."

I wish space allowed me to quote even more examples from more of these talented authors. I was moved again and again by their words. For example, poet Kathryn Stripling Byer, originally from North Georgia, won my heart by touting my beloved Emma Bell Miles as a touchstone throughout her piece. Tennessee writer Jo Carson took the stage and pulled me right into her beguiling saga with the remark, "All my work fits in my mouth."

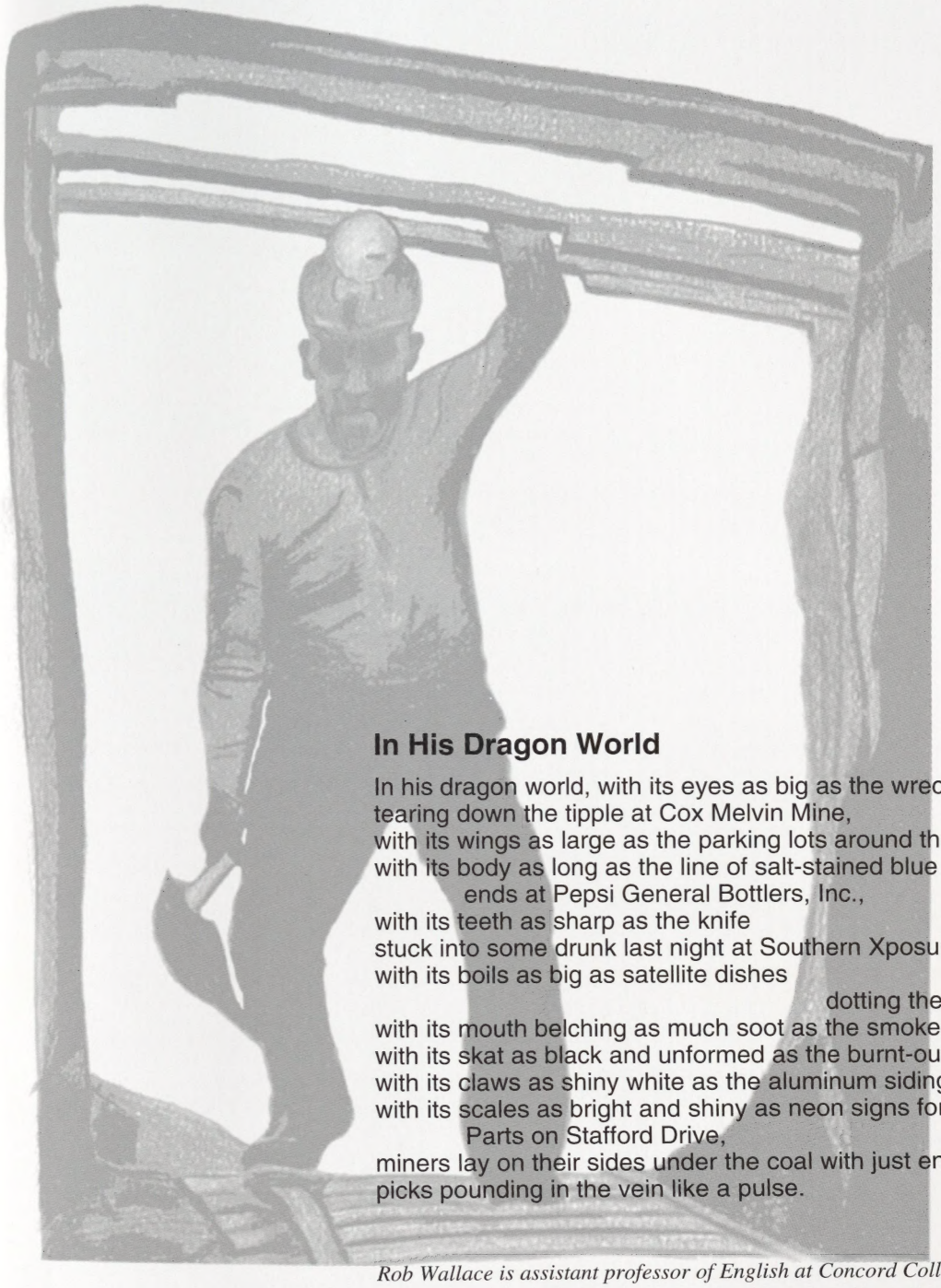
Even Joyce Dyer's simple format provides its own sense of expectation and suspense. She arranges the authors alphabetically, and I found myself guessing whom to expect in the Ds, the Ms, the Rs.

Joyce Dyer dubs her work "a volume of celebration." She lauds the renaissance of writing in Appalachia, even as she laments the lack of notice in broader literary circles. She contends that Appalachian women writers, in particular, have failed to receive their just desserts.

I see her work as part of the remedy for that malady. Her *Bloodroot* shines in flower and root and offers not only cure but also a whole canon, complete with an open invitation to explore.

— Grace Toney Edwards

Grace Toney Edwards is director of the Appalachian Regional Studies Center and Dalton Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Studies and English at Radford University in Radford, Va. She is the 1999 recipient of the Cratis Williams/James Brown Service Award from the Appalachian Studies Association.



April Clark

In His Dragon World

In his dragon world, with its eyes as big as the wrecking balls
tearing down the tipple at Cox Melvin Mine,
with its wings as large as the parking lots around the New River Valley Mall,
with its body as long as the line of salt-stained blue Ford trucks on Route 20 when a shift
ends at Pepsi General Bottlers, Inc.,
with its teeth as sharp as the knife
stuck into some drunk last night at Southern Xposure,
with its boils as big as satellite dishes
dotting the mountains,
with its mouth belching as much soot as the smokestacks at the Celco Plant,
with its skat as black and unformed as the burnt-out Rexall Drugstore,
with its claws as shiny white as the aluminum siding on homes in Boulder Park,
with its scales as bright and shiny as neon signs for Napa Auto Parts and Western Auto
Parts on Stafford Drive,
miners lay on their sides under the coal with just enough space to square their shoulders,
picks pounding in the vein like a pulse.

—Rob Wallace

Rob Wallace is assistant professor of English at Concord College in Athens, W.Va. His poetry has received several awards, including an Academy of American Poets Prize, and has appeared in several journals, most recently Louisiana Literature *and* Yarrow.

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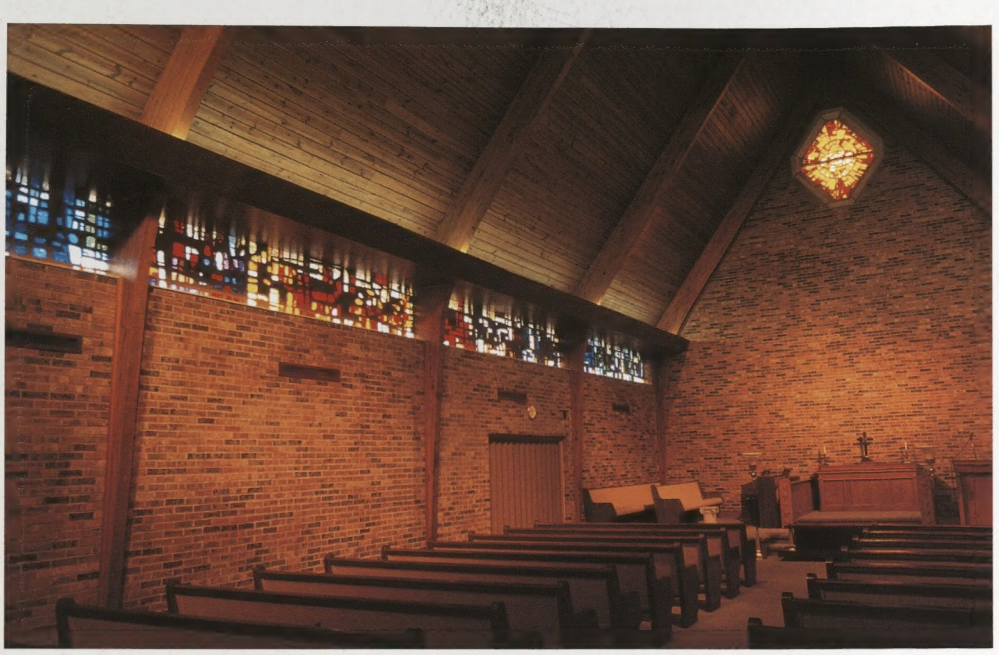

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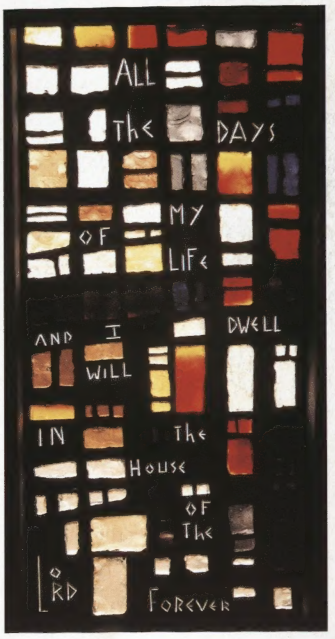

Interior and exterior views of the distinctive stained-glass windows of the Unity Mortuary. The late Rev. De Witt Dykes Sr. of Knoxville, Tenn., designed the Mortuary in 1978. For the story of this man's remarkable architectural career, see "Born to Build" on p. 9

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
East Tennessee State University
Box 70556
Johnson City, TN 37614-0556

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